The experiences of African, Caribbean and South Asian women in initial teacher education

Thesis

THE EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN IN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This thesis is based on research into the subjective views and experiences of a group of black women student teachers. It is through the women's own voices that an insight is given into the experience of teacher training for black women. The women's motivations to enter initial teacher education (ITE), their perceptions of ITE, their experiences in ITE and their experiences as practising teachers are examined through the life history method. This thesis provides a detailed account of the interpretation and meanings black women students apply to their ITE experiences and how those experiences contribute to their learning in ITE. It also illuminates black women's views of primary teaching and their role as primary teachers.

In addition, the inadequacy of multicultural and equal opportunities policies in teacher education are explored in this study. This is followed by an in-depth examination of the role of 'race' during teaching practice placements for black women students, and the influence of 'race' and gender in the experiences of practising black teachers. Chapter four exposes some of the gaps in teacher education in relation to 'race' and education. The case study in chapter five clearly illustrates the role of 'gender' in shaping women's experiences in primary teaching. Having explored the above, I provide examples and make recommendations of possible directions higher education institutions could take to address issues of inequality in teacher education.

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PREFACE

This thesis is about the influence of 'race' and gender in teaching and teacher education. These issues are explored through the life histories of eighteen black[1] women who attended Rosehall College of Higher Education during the years 1990 to 1993. The concept of 'giving voice' (see for example, Blair and Holland, 1995; McElroy-Johnson, 1993) is used to explore these women's motivations for becoming primary teachers, their institutional and teaching practice experiences in primary teacher education, and their experiences as qualified teachers. Their experiences and perspectives throw light on the complex influences in their professional and personal lives, and also on the interactive forces of gender and 'race' in their experiences of teacher education. Through these experiences we are able to understand and identify significant gaps in the practice of teacher education in Britain. It was possible, for example, to evaluate the effectiveness of the multicultural and equal opportunities policies of the College and to underline the strengths and weaknesses of teaching practice placements. In-depth life history interviews provided some insight into the complexity of the women's lives and gave some indication of ways in which the needs of students are reflected in ITE. The information therefore provides a basis for examining current practicies in ITE and exploring the question of how best to create an

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[1] Black is being used here to refer to women of African, Caribbean and South Asian origin. It is recognised that there is an on-going debate around the use of the term black (Boyce Davies, 1994; Modood, 1994; Brah, 1992). I accept that there are many differences between and within the groups. However, the inclusive term black has been adopted throughout to identify those who experience structural and institutional discrimination because of their skin colour.

effective teacher education programme which is informed by an understanding and acknowledgement of diversity within British society.

In a study of this kind it is essential to clarify my use of particular terminology as well as the terms of reference through which the research participants made sense of their lives. I begin by explaining my use of the terms 'black' and 'minority ethnic groups' and then go on to discuss in greater detail the terms 'race' and racism. This latter exercise is particularly important to an understanding of how these women interpret their negative interactions with dominant white groups which occur in the course of their education, as well as in their capacity as qualified teachers in the school and the classroom. As white teachers and students were not interviewed, it is important to have an understanding of how racism operates and is experienced regardless of the motives or intentions of those accused of racism.

Definitions

Black - The term 'black' in this thesis incorporates people of African, Caribbean and South Asian descent. In my first use of the umbrella term 'black' I outlined why this concept had been adopted. The use of the term 'black' to identify South Asian people (especially British Asians) has been severely criticised by Modood (1994) for example, who argues that the concept 'harms' South Asians as it denies the existence of diverse South Asian cultural identities and 'obscures Asian needs' (ibid:866). He further argues that whether or not South Asians are considered to be 'black' is dependent on the

'convenience or politics of the speaker or writer' (ibid:863) and, that this definition is further complicated by the fact that few South Asians would actually define themselves as being 'black', or accept the term as 'referring to themselves' (ibid:860). I agree that individuals have the right to define their own identities (Hall, 1992; hooks, 1989) and that there are cultural differences between and within the three groups. These differences and the diverse cultural needs of the groups might make people question my usage of the concept. However, amongst African, Caribbean and South Asian peoples there are similarities in terms of experience and history (Brah, 1992). I will use the term 'black' therefore when I am talking about 'black' groups.

Minority ethnic group - The phrase 'minority ethnic' is used throughout in place of 'ethnic minority' to highlight the fact that 'everyone belongs to an ethnic group' (Open University course ED356, 1993:5). 'Minority ethnic' places the emphasis on the minority status rather than the ethnicity, whereas 'ethnic minority' places the emphasis on the ethnicity of the individual. Having placed the emphasis on the minority status of groups, it is not necessary then to keep the word ethnic. I intend to refer to minorities or minority groups where relevant.

'Race' and racism - Racism was a significant force in the lives of the women interviewed for this study. It was not possible, however, within the confines of this study, to interview white teachers, teacher educators and students. In order, therefore, to understand why the black women experienced some events as racism, it is

necessary to explore the meaning of 'race' and the development of racism as it effects black people.

In the nineteenth century the concept of 'race' was used to argue that there were distinct physical and genetic differences between the groups that constituted humankind (Banton, 1977). It was suggested that these 'fixed' biological 'differences' were 'natural' and evident in skin colour, head shape, facial features, hair type and physique. This led scientists to assert that there was a racial typology with a hierarchy of 'races', and that certain 'races' were innately superior to others (this notion was particularly evident during the Second World War in Nazi Germany when Hitler tried to 'achieve' a 'pure Aryan master race'). This was also considered to manifest itself in terms of intelligence (Eysenck, 1971; Jensen, 1969). The lack of scientific evidence for a racial typology led to such theories being discredited (UNESCO, 1967). In contemporary times 'race' is defined as a dynamic, 'social, historical and variable category' (McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993:XV) which is constantly 'recreated and modified through human interaction' (Gillborn, 1995:3; McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993; Essed, 1991). Social attitudes to 'race' also vary according to time, place and context. According to Gillborn people use 'race' 'as a way of making sense of the world' and of organising their lives in terms of it (1995:4). In this thesis the term 'race' is used in inverted commas to denote its status as a social construct.

Harvey (1990) argues that 'race' and racism are intertwined. Essed defines racism as,

an ideology, structure, and process in which inequalities inherent in the wider social structure are related in a deterministic way, to biological and cultural factors attributed to those who are seen as a different 'race' or 'ethnic' group (1991:43).

Essed (1991) argues that although racism is historically specific it is not a 'natural' or a permanent feature of European history. Racism is created and reproduced out of a complex set of conditions and circumstances (Gilroy, 1992). The 'new racism' is an example of this. Barker refers to the 'new racism' as 'pseudo-biological culturalism' (1981:23). It is premised on the notion of cultural difference and cultural incompatibility. In the discourse of the 'new racism' (also known as cultural racism) 'customary practices including speech, domestic life and worship are taken to be signs of co-extensive difference' (Feuchtwang, 1992:20). However, despite the discreditation of 'fixed' biological differences between 'racial' groups, this particular notion continues to underpin the 'new racism' with culture often serving as a euphemism for 'race'. This can be seen in the way that ethnicity is also treated as 'fixed' and mutually exclusive. These presumed 'fixed' cultural 'differences' are accordingly paraded in the public arena as constituting 'real' grounds for cultural incompatibility. According to Carter et al. (1992) such commonsense understandings 'prevent people from recognising what they have in common' with each other (Carter et al., 1992 quoted by Gillborn, 1995:3).

In Britain, the 'new racism' is disseminated in public discussions and media portrayals of the dominant majority as forming a unified

white nation state who participate in a shared British culture, history and identity, and who have a 'common' sense of 'belonging' (Gilroy, 1992). According to Sarup, the nation 'postulates a collective subject - it is the state and place in which 'we' live' (1991:81). Exponents of the 'new racism' argue that there is a need to protect the British nation and the national culture (language, values, moral and social order) from those who are presumed to pose a threat to its existence. Such people have the 'distinctive' feature of being black. Black people, whether they are born in Britain or not, are not viewed as part of the nation state and as such their 'alien' cultures are thought to pose a threat to the survival of the 'British way of life' (Sarup, 1991). Short (1994) argues that anything that is thought to endanger,

> the national way of life, anything that disrupts what Enoch Powell in 1977 referred to as the homogenous 'we' (such as the relatively large immigrant population with an alien culture), will be disorientating and resented (Short, 1994:335).

It is noticeable however, that white immigrant groups who have settled in Britain over the years (and those more recently) are not viewed as having 'alien' cultures or perceived as being a threat to the nation's existence. It is evident as Sarup (1991) argues that, 'Powellism' constructed 'the black presence as Other, a problem or threat, against which a homogenous white, national 'we' could be unified' (ibid:91). This is the frame of reference through which majority ethnic groups make sense of their own identities and the identities of those designated 'Other'.

It is important to note that 'Englishness' is often equated and used interchangeably with 'Britishness' (Hall, 1992). According to the 'new racism',

> it is in our biology, our instincts to defend our way of life, traditions and customs against outsiders - not because they are inferior, but because they are part of different cultures (Barker, 1981:24).

Non-white cultures are deemed to be incompatible with that of a 'quintessential' England. Such cultures are regarded as the means by which the British nation and ultimately the British identity will be eroded. For example, in the July (1995) edition of 'Wisden' it was suggested that the inclusion of non-white players in the English cricket team served to dilute and erode the 'Englishness' of the team. The article questioned the commitment of 'negro' (sic) and South Asian cricketers who play for England. It was argued, for example, that the cricketers Devon Malcolm and Philip DeFreitas (who were born in the Caribbean) have affiliations to their country of origin, and as such could not be expected to play for England with the same feeling and commitment as an English man would have when playing for his country. It was further argued that African-Caribbean and South Asian players would find it extremely difficult to perform to the best of their ability when playing against cricket teams from the West Indies, India and Pakistan because of a conflict of interests. Such assumptions imply that adorning an English cricket outfit does not make a black cricketer English, or confirm his dedication to serve England wholeheartedly. Similar ideas have over the years been promoted and perpetuated through a series of

immigration acts which have targetted black people for exclusion and through which black people have been portrayed as an 'alien threat' (Solomos, 1989). Sensationalist statements by politicians such as Powell and Churchill continue to shape the popular imagination into accepting an 'us' and 'them' which is clearly divided by colour.

> We must not ignore or sweep under the carpet the impact on our society and the British way of life of the new arrival in our midst ... of three to four million immigrants from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean (M.P. Winston Churchill, quoted by Short, 1994:337).

Tomlinson (1990) considers fears of British cultural extinction as being responsible for the development of an 'educational nationalism' and the demise of multicultural education. Tomlinson (1990) suggests that multicultural education which advocates support for cultural diversity is not viewed by the government as being conducive to supporting a 'common' British culture. According to the New Right children in British schools should have access to a curriculum which reflects British traditions, culture and history, and that pupils should be treated alike without reference to or consideration of their cultural and 'racial' identities (Menter, 1992; Tomlinson, 1990; Minhas, 1988). The National Curriculum was the means by which a 'common' British cultural identity was to be fostered amongst pupils.

The policies and attitudes adopted by the government since the 1980's towards education and immigration would seem to support Gilroy's contention that racism is 'determining rather than determinate, at

the centre rather than in the margins' of British politics (1992:52). It would also seem to confirm that the 'specific forms racism takes are determined by the economic, political, social and organizational conditions of society' (Essed, 1991:11-12). Although it is 'cultural difference' and not 'race' which is used to define 'Britishness/Englishness' and to justify deracialized government policies, the 'new racism' is thought to represent a re-working of old racist ideas (Gillborn, 1995; Short, 1994). For the purpose of this thesis therefore, racism is used to refer to,

> a variety of attitudes, practices and types of behaviour, which may not necessarily be either overt or intentional, but which serve to discriminate against or to marginalize people judged to be of 'another race' (Open University course - ED356, 'Race, Education and Society', 1993:5).

It is through this definition that individual and institutional practices are assessed and the experiences of the black women are discussed.

Aims and objectives of the study

The research reported in the following chapters details the motivations and the institutional and teaching experiences of eighteen black women who entered primary teaching via the four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree, and one-year Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course at Rosehall College of Higher

Education[2] which is situated in the South East of England. It also reveals the first year post-qualifying experiences of some of these black women.

There are several reasons why I chose to focus on the experiences of black women in primary ITE. Firstly, there is a dearth of data concerning ITE experiences of black students. Secondly, it is widely accepted that women predominate in primary teaching and primary ITE (Adler, Laney and Packer, 1993; DeLyon and Migniuolo, 1989), and whilst black people as a group are under-represented in ITE (Adelman, 1993; Whitty et al., 1992) and in teaching (NASUWT, 1993), black women do, however, outnumber black men in teaching and education courses (Arora, 1989). Thus the insights black women bring to the ITE student and post-qualifying experience is an interesting, and potentially informative angle from which to view primary teaching. Thirdly, although black women form part of a minority of black teachers, they need to speak for themselves about their own experiences as women, as students and as practising teachers. As a researcher I believe I can contribute to this process, through the life history method, by giving a voice to black women student teachers. In 1991, Goodson called for the teacher's voice to be 'heard loudly, heard articulately' (ibid:36). He repeated this call again in 1994. I would like to extend Goodson's (1991, 1994) plea by arguing that black student teachers need to be 'heard loudly' and fully understood. Studying the lives of black women student teachers through their own voices will not only provide a valuable insight

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2 Pseudonyms have been used in an attempt to protect the identity of the researched ITE institution and the research participants.

into their experiences of primary ITE and the roles they adopt as qualified teachers, but also how their 'racial' identities impact on their development as teachers. A fourth reason for basing this research on black women is that it will provide us with an opportunity to assess their perceptions of primary teaching, and the meaning their role as primary teachers has for them. This may in turn offer black pupils a different lens through which to see teaching. It might also give an indication as to how we might increase the black teacher population. Although I cite the next reason as my fifth it is in fact one of the most important reasons for choosing to research the experiences of black women student teachers, and is best described by Sita, one of the research participants in this study.

> I haven't met anybody who is really interested and who would be concerned enough to sit down and say: "What have your experiences been like?" Perhaps it's because there isn't a large majority, or even a large enough number of black students in ITE to warrant a study on their experiences and perceptions. (Sita)

It is important to state at the outset that whilst I am particularly concerned about the low numbers of black teachers, I wanted to discover the motivations for entering teaching and the experiences of those who had already chosen to have a career in teaching.

In light of findings by Singh (1988) and Swann (1985) (see introductory chapter), I wanted to assess the significance of racism for black women entering teaching. I also wanted to understand the

extent to which racism features in black women's decisions to become primary teachers. Given that primary teaching is predominantly carried out by women I also wanted to find out the extent to which black women have absorbed and internalized gendered ideologies of teaching; in other words whether they consider primary teachers as being 'motherly' and primary teaching as a vocation for women. Having explored these two areas the aim was to highlight some of the main motivations of the black women who entered primary ITE at Rosehall College of Higher Education. In addition to the above I wanted to discover what it is like for these black women in primary ITE, that is what issues they felt contributed most to their institutional and teaching practice experiences and their professional development. I also sought to examine the first year post-qualifying experiences of black women teachers and to understand their views about primary teaching.

The main objective of studying the lives of black women student teachers therefore was to provide an analysis of the gendered, racialized, classed and ethnicized nature of black women's experiences in primary ITE and teaching, because as Norquay points out,

> ... individual's often struggle with varying and often contradictory subject positions which are constructed around gender, race, class and ethnicity ... which intersect in a variety of ways (1990:292).

This thesis provides a microcosmic, but in-depth insight into black women's primary ITE and teaching experiences. It is hoped that the

findings will contribute to an understanding of the experiences of ITE for black students, and about teaching as a profession which is largely avoided by black people. My overall intention is to fill a gap in the literature on ITE by bringing attention to issues seldom dealt with, for example, how can teacher education be more effective? Through the accounts of eighteen black women, this thesis highlights both theoretical and practical issues which can contribute to more effective education of teachers in a multiethnic society, and better prepare teachers for teaching in a society characterized by diversity.

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I look at the role of racism in the recruitment of black teachers into the profession. This, and the discussion of gender in primary education provides the background for understanding the women's motivations for becoming teachers. It is argued that racism does not necessarily deter black women, but that racism does influence their professional identities. It is also argued that despite the history of the feminization of primary education, the women in this study did not consider that their status as women dictated their practices as teachers.

BLACK PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING AND INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION IN BRITAIN

A survey carried out by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) (1988) of eight Local Education Authorities (LEA's) revealed that in comparison to the black population in Britain (4.4%) African, Caribbean and South Asian teachers were severely under-represented in schools (2%). Although the black population has now increased to 5.3% the under-representation of black teachers has continued (Siraj-Blatchford, 1995, 1993a; NASUWT, 1993; Pyke, 1993). In 1992, the CRE noted that whilst Britain's largest LEA (Birmingham) employed 23,000 teachers, only twenty-three of these teachers were from minority communities (CRE, 1992). Duncan, a black secondary school headteacher, cites 'low pay, low morale and low government priority' (1992:36) as being responsible for the general unattractiveness of teaching to black and white people. Other careers offer incentives, such as higher salaries, prestige and

promotion prospects which are absent for teachers, absences which are considered to be the main obstacles to students entering teaching (Taylor, F., 1993). The Report of the National Commission on Education (1994) claimed that,

> career progression and rewards for experienced teachers are not sufficient to ensure recruitment, retention and motivation of high quality professionals (cited by Darke, 1994:9).

The current climate of underfunding, job cuts, large classes, discipline problems, increased workloads (brought about by the 1988 Education Reform Act and the introduction of the National Curriculum) and the recent attacks on teacher education (for specific details see Barton et al., 1994; Hill, 1992; McNamara, 1992; Menter, 1992; Whitty, 1991) may also account for the disillusionment of some teachers and the negative image that teaching has acquired. Increasingly, teachers find themselves being judged by their performance in the classroom and by the academic success or failure of their pupils. This is facilitated through appraisal schemes and the publication of league tables of school examination results. The overall achievements of individual schools are measured against national and international standards.

> The gulf in outcomes between our best schools and our worst is big, much bigger than in most countries (The Report of the National Commission on Education cited by Darke, 1994:8).

The monitoring of teachers' performance together with the changes in the education system (including the increased accountability of

teachers to parents and school governing bodies) and the additional demands (especially administrative tasks) on teachers' time, has led to fears of teachers 'becoming a minority group' (Woods, 1994:250) as many accept early retirement or seek alternative careers. Duncan (1992) suggests that if we add racism in teaching to the factors cited above we will understand black people's lack of interest in teaching.

The CRE's 1988 study found that black teachers accounted for two per cent of the teaching population; they languished on the lowest salary levels - 78% on scale 1 or 2 compared with 57% of white teachers; had fewer career prospects and were concentrated in teacher shortage subjects - 29% compared with 16% of white teachers. Most attributed their position and discontent within teaching to racial discrimination.

A conference report by the now defunct Inner London Education Authority (ILEA, 1983) had earlier highlighted several cases where black teachers had found themselves 'trapped' in what they described as permanent supply posts. Even with twenty five years teaching experience it was often difficult to gain a foothold in a school. Bhattacharya states that insecure contracts were a way of tying individuals to the 'bottom salary scale for years and years' (1990:1). Many black teachers found themselves marginalised in posts such as Section 11 (which was created specifically to cater for the particular needs of black children) and as teachers for low ability streams (Bhattacharya, 1990). These low ability classes were renowned for being predominantly populated by black pupils (Bangar and McDermott, 1989). Others were excluded from promotional opportunities despite proven academic ability and

suitability for the vacant position. In the Times Educational Supplement, it was reported that despite having 'equal qualifications and experience, black teachers have to make twice as many applications as white teachers to get a position' (Wallace, 1988:23). The findings of the National Commission on Education (see Darke, 1994) would seem to suggest that the situation has not improved for black teachers in the 1990's.

Minhas's 1988 report (in Minhas, 1992) on the recruitment and promotion of black teachers in the London borough of Ealing highlighted many of the difficulties which they experience. The report revealed that most headteachers thought that black teachers were best suited to teaching black children, and providing multicultural education in multi-ethnic schools. Such assumptions not only questioned the ability of black teachers to teach in all white schools but contributed to flawed selection and promotion procedures. As a result of the negative perceptions of black teaching ability several black teachers found themselves deployed to more 'suitable' schools. The report also highlighted other aspects of individual racism that black teachers experienced in Ealing.

Sethi (1990), in detailing a catalogue of racist experiences suffered by black teachers in the school where he worked, states that in the late 1970's the negative experiences endured by black and white teachers were treated differently. For example,

> If students are foul mouthed and abusive to a white member of staff the problem is recognised immediately as a matter for the usual disciplinary procedures, but the management tended

to ignore or minimise the importance of similar abuse, delivered with racist embellishments, if a black teacher were to be on the receiving end (Sethi, 1990:48).

Ten years on little had changed.

> Even today there's an elitism about whose concerns merit disciplinary attention (op. cit; see also Evans, 1988).

Sethi (1990) bemoans the fact that the concerns of black teachers are still not taken seriously by headteachers.

The existence of racial discrimination in teaching and the disproportionately low numbers of black teachers was also recognised by the Swann Report (1985). The Report argued that black teachers were 'still subject to racial prejudice and discrimination' (Swann, 1985:213). It also attributed the low numbers of black teachers to a lack of the necessary qualifications. But the ILEA Report (1983) cited above, states that many black teachers were denied access to teaching because their overseas qualifications were perceived as being inferior to British qualifications. As a consequence, they were refused qualified teacher status by the Department of Education and Science (DES). The introduction of the Articled and Licensed Teacher schemes in 1989 (whereby graduates and individuals who had completed two years study in higher education could be employed by LEA's and trained in schools) was seen by the DES as a possible solution to the black teacher shortage, and a way of removing their responsibility for having to consider overseas qualifications for qualified teacher status (Minhas, 1992).

However, Barrett et al. (1992) revealed that institutional practices have been partly responsible for the lack of success of these schemes in increasing the number of black teachers. Despite these new initiatives racism seems to account to a large degree for the low numbers of black teachers today. The Swann Report (1985) stated that teaching was not a favoured career with students from minority groups. Some of the reasons given are as follows:

> They (students) had experienced racism and negative stereotyping of ethnic minority groups while at school and had no desire therefore to rejoin such an institution; they were disenchanted by the somewhat limited role which they felt many ethnic minority teachers were asked to play in the system - as E2L (English as a second language) or "mother tongue" teachers or simply as supervisors of ethnic minority pupils and the restricted career opportunities this presented; and
>
> they did not regard teaching as offering good career prospects in the current economic situation, especially since they felt their own chances in the job market would be hindered by the influence of racism (Swann, 1985:610).

Singh's (1988) interviews with South Asian and white sixth-formers confirmed Swann's (1985) findings. The South Asian pupils considered the prevalence of racism amongst pupils and staff in

schools to be the main deterrent to black students entering teaching. This viewpoint is also supported by Bhattacharya who states that:

> very few young black people feel encouraged to join this discriminatory profession. They have seen their previous generation under-valued and humiliated and they know their contemporaries get the same treatment (1990:4).

Lane cites 'racism within the system ... lack of status, conflicts with the traditions and values of cultural groups and disaffection with the establishment' (1988:15) as reasons for higher education and ITE failing to attract prospective black students (see also CRE, 1986). All of these views are to a certain extent shared and verified by the experiences of East and Pitt (1989) who argue that schools reflect the reality of racial oppression in British society (see also Bangar and McDermott, 1989; McKellar, 1989; Wallace, 1988).

> I was in the staffroom and the school keeper came in and automatically assumed I was a stranger or a cleaner. The fact that I was black, he thought that I couldn't possibly be one of the teachers. It's like something that happens quite a lot in this society. You get used to it. I was angry, but more so than being in other situations - in a restaurant and people thinking I'm serving or cleaning up (East and Pitt, 1989:43).

The experiences of black student teachers highlighted by Siraj-Blatchford's (1991) survey of ninety-eight ITE institutions provides a picture of racism in ITE and may give some indication of the reasons for black students choosing other careers. Sixty-nine per cent of the

students surveyed reported incidents of racism during teaching practice, and forty per cent highlighted racism from lecturing staff. The following examples illustrate the type of racist experiences encountered by some of the students.

> The lecturers made racist comments such as 'Asians eating with their fingers is a little primitive these days, especially with technology having advanced so much'.... (Siraj-Blatchford, 1991:43).

> In an urban, mainly white school the older children, upper infants and juniors made racist comments such as 'Blacky' and 'Nigger' (ibid:47).

> I did a T.P. in an urban multiracial school. I was placed in a class which is considered by both my tutors and teaching staff to be the worst they have ever seen. I was verbally and physically abused by the children. The only reason I was placed there is because I am black. They removed a white student yet despite my pleas to leave they would not let me. I am ignored by all of the staff. My class teacher treats me as if I am invisible mainly because I disagree with the way the children are treated i.e. constant suspensions rather than logical reasoning and a consistent approach (ibid:47).

McDermott's black identity like the above student's was 'unacknowledged' during her ITE course - a denial which 'undermined' her 'ability to deal with some of the situations' in which she found herself (1989:136). Clay et al's (1991) depiction of a

black student's telling account of her experiences in ITE supports the claims made by the students in Siraj-Blatchford's (1991) study. The student, Anita, suggests that her experiences were worsened by her institution's blindness to racism. Anita was disheartened by her ITE experiences. She laments that the 'glossy prospectus' she had read 'did not mention that for black women it would mean entering a totally unsupportive and hostile environment' (Clay et al., 1991:26). This account together with those provided by Siraj-Blatchford (1991) suggests that black students soon find their idealistic notions of teaching as a career, dashed once they enter ITE. As well as coping with the everyday stresses and strains of being a student teacher, black student teachers also experience racism in the institutional environment and teaching practice school. Anita's tale ends with a cautionary note, 'only enrol if you are prepared to be stripped of your dignity and self esteem' (Clay et al., 1991:28). According to Menter (1989a), black students may not attempt to challenge such negative ITE experiences because they are more concerned with their survival; the ultimate aim being to pass the course and escape the oppressing environment. This implies that black student teachers need to bring something extra special to the learning process in ITE. The examples of racism highlighted above provide a basis for further investigation of black students' ITE experiences.

Whilst black student teachers are under-represented in the profession, black teacher educators are virtually non-existent. According to a survey carried out by the Anti-Racist Teacher Education Network (ARTEN - 1988) black teacher educators represented only 0.6% of teacher educators in Britain. McKellar, one of the few black teacher educators, points out that the terms of

reference operating in ITE institutions are so 'middle-class that only the fittest of the fittest can survive' (1989:81). However, her experiences of racism and isolation in the education system may go some way towards explaining the low numbers of black teachers and teacher educators (see also Powney and Weiner, 1992). As a pupil she suffered racial harrassment from her peers and witnessed the negative attitudes her teachers displayed towards black pupils. Determined not to be defeated by such experiences, McKellar (1989) used them as an inspiration to achieve academically. As a student teacher, it became clear to her that if she was to succeed she would need to employ similar strategies. The constant need to 'work twice as hard' to prove one's ability in teacher education illustrates that it is not only black students who have to be strong but black teacher educators too.

From the above it seems clear that black teachers, black student teachers and black teacher educators experience racism in teaching. It is also evident that experiences of racism for black students are not confined to ITE but permeate the whole of the education system. The research by Siraj-Blatchford (1991) and Clay et al. (1991) clearly demonstrate that the experience of racism is widespread in ITE institutions. As a result of his own experiences as a headteacher, Duncan, has suggested that 'seniority does not lessen racism' in teaching (1992:37). Nevertheless, it is apparent that despite the negative ITE experiences of black students and those of practising black teachers, some black students still choose teaching as a career. Why? As my research was about the life histories of black women who had chosen to become primary school teachers it is not possible, in this thesis, to provide explanations as to why black students as a

whole enter teaching. I can, however, give an insight into some of the reasons why the black women in this study chose to enter primary ITE. In the next part of this chapter, I shall attempt to establish possible reasons for black women entering primary teaching by outlining the historical entry of women into primary teaching in Britain and, the development of primary teaching as a profession for women. This will provide background information into how roles for female primary teachers were perceived and a basis from which to examine these particular women's reasons for wanting to become primary as opposed to secondary school teachers.

THE FEMINIZATION OF TEACHING IN BRITAIN

Although 'six in every seven' new primary teachers are women, few women occupy the higher scaled posts or positions of authority in primary schools (Hill, 1994:16; Acker, 1992, Evetts, 1990; Nias, 1989). Senior positions in the junior age range are usually held by men. Early years teaching (4-7 years) is an area where few men choose to work. The reason for this and for the predominance of women in primary teaching can be traced back to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Until the latter part of the nineteenth century most elementary aged children were taught by men. The Elementary Act of 1870 made schooling compulsory and introduced the need for more teachers. This was an opportunity for 'respectable' working and lower middle-class women to become elementary teachers (Maguire and Weiner, 1994; Miller, 1992). School teaching was one of the few professions open to educated middle-class women, but it is unlikely that the new

entrants to teaching were highly educated as secondary and higher educational opportunities for girls were limited at this time (Dyhouse, 1984). Elementary pupils were therefore taught by women who only had the basic rudiments of an education themselves. Purvis (1995) notes that working-class girls were usually taught by uncertificated women teachers because they were cheaper to employ than male certificated teachers. The use of low paid uncertificated teachers contributed to the development of state education after 1870 and the feminization of elementary teaching. Although women entered teaching in greater numbers during this period, the feminization of elementary teaching did not occur until after the First World War when the barriers restricting women's access to paid employment were removed and men in turn sought higher paid, higher valued careers. The expansion of employment opportunities for men in other fields, in part, led to a redefining of elementary teaching as a profession for women.

An idea which emerged in the nineteenth and took hold in the twentieth century was the belief that teaching was something that could be done by women, since women were supposedly blessed with maternal instincts (Oram, 1989). Women's supposed 'natural' qualities of nurturance, caring, patience, love of children and their understanding of the behaviour of young children earmarked them for elementary teaching. Mann (1846) claimed that,

> reason and experience have long since demonstrated that children, under ten or twelve years of age, can be more genially taught and more successfully governed by a female than a male teacher (Cited by Russell, 1979:41).

The association of teaching with maternal attributes - nurturing and caring - contributed to the construction of the view that primary teaching was a version of mothering (Steedman, 1988) and as such it became an 'ideal' job for women. This perception, together with the belief that elementary pupils could be taught by girls of 'average intellectual capacity' (Oram, 1989:22; see also Miller, 1992), accounted for elementary teaching's newly acquired low status, and its lack of prestige for men.

Mann (1846) stated that it was nature's intention that women as mothers would be educators of children. This theory supports the view that teaching is 'complementary to women's 'usual' and 'natural' role of wife and mother' (Clarricoates, 1988:70). However, as Oram points out, before the First World War it was 'unusual for women of any class to be employed outside of the home after marriage' (Oram, 1987:277). It is noticeable that whilst married women teachers were encouraged to return to teaching during and immediately after the war, they were officially excluded by LEA's from teaching during the early 1920's through the introduction of the marriage bar (Oram, 1987, 1989). A ban was imposed on married women being appointed and many local authorities dismissed those already employed. Upon marriage women teachers were expected to resign their posts. This principle was not extended to married men. Oram views the marriage bar as part of the 'post war backlash against women' (1987:278). The marriage bar (in use until the 1944 Education Act) served patriarchal needs by providing more jobs for men and maintaining the salary differential between men and women. Men as breadwinners were deemed to need jobs and higher earnings to support their families (Littlewood, 1995). Although some

married women found employment as supply and temporary teachers, the widespread implementation of the marriage bar meant that the concept of a mother being a good teacher could not be put to the test. According to Miller (1992) the marriage bar was applied (by men) to prevent women from neglecting their duties as wives and mothers. In the first instance, the ideology that motherhood was synonymous with teaching was used to encourage women into teaching and in the second, it was utilised to create teaching as a domain for the young single female. Nevertheless, the association of motherhood with teaching continued.

Steedman outlines two other factors which accounted for the development of primary teaching as a version of mothering.

> i) the educative sphere of the middle class mother in the domestic schoolroom of the nineteenth century; and from
> ii) a translation, for the educational market, of the natural, unforced education that nineteenth century observers saw being imparted by poor (preferably peasant) mothers to their children (1988:83)

Nineteenth century middle-class mothers combined mothering (catering for children's moral, emotional and psychological development) with educating their children. They provided stimulating educational learning environments. The experiences of mothering and their intellectual backgrounds were deemed to be suitable grounds for teaching. It was argued that women could transfer these private roles into public classrooms. The ideas of middle-class domestic education filtered down into primary teaching,

particularly with regard to working-class children who it was felt were deprived of the benefits of 'good' educated mothers (see for example, Tizard and Hughes, 1988). It was thought that middle-class maternal education could compensate these children for the misfortune of being born working-class. The assumption that middle-class values could be trickled downward, resulting in the instilling of respect for authority in the masses, was very much part of the education system. The attributes (intellect, respectability and conformity) that middle-class women brought to teaching were thought appropriate to aid the all round development of pupils, whilst the interactions of working-class mothers with their children (which were thought to be based on 'instinct, feeling and 'naturalness' - Steedman, 1988:86) were incorporated into elementary teaching and teaching textbooks. Elementary teachers were expected to identify and empathise with their pupils like mothers. Pupils on the other hand were encouraged to 'fulfil their need to touch, handle and construct' (ibid:86). This formed the beginning of child-centred education (Plowden - DES, 1967). According to Steedman (I988) the qualities (referred to above) that both middle and working-class mothers were deemed to contribute to mothering became central to the 'mother made conscious' philosophy of primary teacher education in the twentieth century.

By the middle of the twentieth century the identification of primary teaching with mothering and women's work was complete. Even the female principals of women's colleges saw their role as one of mothering (Dyhouse, 1984). Despite the view that women are 'naturally' maternal, teacher education up to the 1960's sought to produce 'the appropriate, feminine, teaching professional' (Maguire

and Weiner, 1994:123). Women who were not actually mothers were expected to identify with 'good' mother figures if they were to become successful primary teachers.

During the 1950's the mothering ideology became associated with children's emotional development (Littlewood, 1989). It was thought that the mother was central to the emotional development of the child. The return of married women to teaching (after the marriage bar had been removed) provided the opportunity for educated mothers to contribute to the 'emotional life of the school' (Littlewood, 1989:185). However, theories of maternal deprivation (Bowlby, 1953) were used to encourage married women to work part-time or take career breaks to rear their children in order to prevent them from becoming emotionally unstable.

The 'mothering discourse' has persisted over the years and is still to be found in contemporary primary teaching (Epstein, 1993; Griffin and Smith, 1991). In primary classrooms where women predominate teachers can be found demonstrating patience and caring for the needs of their pupils as a mother would. In her study of a group of women primary teachers Acker (1995) discovered that a 'mothering-style bond' had developed between the women and their pupils. These teachers cared for their pupils and talked of being needed by 'their children'. As a 'mothering' teacher, Steedman, 'loved' her 'children ... worked hard for them' and even 'lay awake at night worrying about them' (1987:118). Early years teachers will comfort and take care of the toilet needs of children if necessary. If children fall they will pick them up, soothe their cries and encourage them to continue. The early years classroom becomes a substitute home,

complete with a substitute mother, love, understanding, elastoplast and a home corner. If these classrooms become too untidy the teacher is considered to be an inefficient mother. Primary teachers, like mothers, are judged by their mothering and housewifery skills (Clandinin, 1986). Acker likened the women teachers she observed to 'careful housewives, practicing make do and mend' (1995:27). On the whole these teachers coped with the circumstances in which they were expected to teach, for example, a lack of resources, and they 'did whatever was needed'. For example, they 'baked scones for refreshments at the school fair ... sewed costumes for productions ... washed up the coffee cups' and took 'tea towels home to launder them' (ibid:30). Interestingly, female pupil teachers in the early nineteenth century were expected to participate in the domestic chores of 'cleaning, clothes washing and repair' (Maguire and Weiner, 1994:124). Today, fulfilling household tasks like tidying up or teaching pupils the basic skills of sewing are essential elements of the teaching/mothering role.

The other side of mothering relates to the more professional role of educating children. If pupils display a lack of interest in education the primary teacher, like a mother, will coax and develop their interest and persuade them to work harder. The ability to provide learning opportunities, to establish obedience and relate to the individual needs of children, whilst attending to other duties, is still very much a middle-class model of teaching - one which is becoming more evident with the increasing paper work and classroom organization that the National Curriculum has introduced.

According to Burgess and Carter, 'being Mumsy - bringing out the best in each child' or 'being a mother figure' (1992:353), are the frames of reference through which some first year primary ITE students perceive the role of primary teachers. The students they researched equated primary classrooms with 'visiting a family', but the idea that primary classrooms represent homes filled with families, or that women teachers themselves view their classes as part of a wider family (the school) is debatable. Beattie found that some women's notions of teaching depended on their ability to live out their 'image of family relations in the classroom' (1992:11). However, Casey has suggested that whilst the backgrounds of some women teachers might lead them to care for children, they do so 'not as a parent, but as a kind of big sister' (1990:307). She further argues, that many women see teaching as offering respite from their own daily routine of mothering and would thus oppose taking on the responsibilities of another family. This would seem to support Acker's contention that, the image of primary teaching 'as natural nurturing encourages us to forget that for teachers, the classroom is a workplace' (1995:24).

The values attributed to parenting such as patience, love and understanding may be at the centre of some teachers notions of primary teaching, but this does not mean that all women possess these qualities or that they are able to apply them in their teaching. In chapters two and five it will be shown that black women's conception of primary teaching and the roles they adopt in school do not relate to notions of women as 'mothering' teachers. It is important to note that the mothers in my study saw their parenting roles as being distinct and separate from their teaching roles.

Schools and higher education institutions may project an image of primary education as a 'natural' function to be performed by women (Aspinwall and Drummond, 1989). They might even imply that early years teaching and mothering are one and the same, but this denies the inherent contradictions in such expectations. It is not possible to be both mother and teacher or 'haven-makers and rescuers' to all the pupils in the classroom (Hargreaves, A., 1994:145; for an example of male haven-makers see Butt, et. al., 1990). In a study carried out by Bullough et al. (1991) it was shown that if a teacher tried to perform all the functions of mothering then she would find very little, if any, time for teaching. They noted that teachers who attempted to parent both at home and at school often found that there was no time to fulfil both roles, or they were too exhausted to function effectively as teachers. Acker also noticed that teachers who sacrificed their own personal needs in favour of those of 'their children' often became 'very tired' as a result (1995:29-30). The English teachers in Broadfoot and Osborn's study of English and French primary teachers, made it clear that in trying to cater for all the needs of their pupils and fulfil their own teaching goals, they were striving 'to do something that is impossible to achieve' (1988:281; see also Hargreaves, A. 1994; Clarricoates, 1988).

Although the pattern of behaviour Acker (1995) describes amongst the primary women teachers she studied would seem to underline the notion of women as 'mothering' teachers, she suggests that it is 'caring in a context' (ibid:32). Her findings indicate that teacher-pupil relationships have to be negotiated and the conditions in which teachers are expected to work, for example, buildings in need of repair, often make it difficult for them to achieve their aims. This

in turn can lead to feelings of frustration and anger. Andrew Hargreaves (1994) has argued that teachers who are unable to fulfil their ideals of caring and nurturing pupils sometimes experience depressive guilt. This would seem to provide further evidence for Acker's claim that 'caring has its limits' (1995:29).

Nias (1989) has shown that the sentiments of love, care and understanding also feature in the teaching perspectives of male primary teachers. However, in 1993 when the government outlined its proposals for the reform of initial primary education, the new proposals were specifically aimed at women. The government sought to reduce primary Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) courses from four to three years, with one year's training for early years teachers; that is parents (mothers) over twenty-five with experience of children (Beckett, 1993; DFE, 1993a). The former Secretary of State for Education, John Patten, described a future whereby early years pupils would be taught by the mature mother figure - 'Mum's Army'. This proposal (later withdrawn) was greeted with contempt and opposition from teachers and teacher educators alike. It was interpreted as an attempt to further reduce the status of primary teaching. O'Keefe had earlier stated that an early years teacher only needed to be a '...well educated person who likes children and is good at teaching them, and good at controlling them' (1990:14). This description not only bore the hallmarks of nineteenth century opinion of elementary teachers, but like the notion of 'Mum's Army', implied that nurturing is 'natural' to women. As a result of this assumption early years teachers were presumed to need less training. If nurturing and teaching are 'natural' to women it is reasonable to assume that early years teachers would need no

training at all. In fact, it could be argued that it is impossible to teach that which comes naturally. However, training itself is a misleading concept as it suggests that all that teachers require is skills training (see for example, O'Hear, 1988). Early years teaching is more than the application of acquired skills, it 'integrates caring and a consideration of the interests of children with a wide range of individual and social needs' (Siraj-Blatchford, 1993b: 404). Although the experience of parenting may attract some women to primary teaching (East and Pitt, 1989), without teacher 'education' teachers cannot acquire the skills necessary to become educators themselves.

In the nineteenth century:

> the education of the young was very clearly delineated and located at the bottom of any hierarchy in teaching (Maguire and Weiner, 1994:124; see also Deem, 1995).

As we move towards the twenty-first century the association of primary teaching with mothering continues to undermine the status of the primary school teacher, and it has done nothing to dismiss the view that primary teaching is low status women's work.

END POINTS

From the preceding discussions it is evident that black teachers are under-represented in British schools and that primary teaching positions are mainly occupied by women. It was argued that black students are discouraged from joining the teaching profession because of racism in education, and that women become primary

teachers because they consider it a suitable or 'natural' vocation for women (Burgess and Carter, 1992). This thesis explores the reasons given by the black women in this study for entering primary ITE at Rosehall College of Higher Education. It also examines their experiences as women students in ITE and as practising teachers. This is an aspect which the literature on black experiences of ITE and teaching has largely ignored. Similarly, the literature which explores gender in teaching has neglected racism in the experiences of black students in ITE and of black teachers. This thesis looks at both student and practitioner experience and has both the gendered and racialized experiences of black women as a central feature.

In the following chapter I outline how the research participants were chosen, how the study was conducted and why life history was chosen as the method for collecting the research data and achieving the stated aims.

CHAPTER 1

METHOD

INTRODUCTION

I set out to discover the main factors which motivated black women to enter primary ITE, their experiences of ITE and their first year experiences as qualified teachers. I wanted to explore black women's daily lives as student teachers and establish if institutional and teaching practice experiences influenced the type of teachers the women were likely to become. The other aims of this research can be summarised as follows:

1) To examine the similarities and differences between black women's experiences.

2) To examine black women's perceptions of primary teaching and the meaning their role as primary teachers has for them. What roles do black women adopt as teachers? In other words what type of teachers do they become and why?

3) To find out the first year teaching experiences of black women as qualified teachers and to ascertain if there are any differences between student and practitioner experience.

4) To see whether and how their experiences of teacher education affected their development as individuals and as teachers.

I chose the life history method (see next section) as discussed by Bertaux (1981), Plummer (1983) and others as the most appropriate method to explore my aims and to record the 'essence' (Fisher, 1991) of black women's lives as students and as practising teachers. The life history method also afforded me the opportunity to present black women's experiences in a format which is readily accessible.

Bertaux (1981) argues that it is possible to collect life history data via life stories which can be focussed around a particular aspect in a person's life. In the attempt to bring black women's everyday realities of ITE and teaching into sharper focus, I concentrated on the educational, rather than the home experiences, of the black women in this research. These stories when elaborated upon indicate the experience of teacher education, and the role and meaning of primary teaching in the lives and identities of black women.

This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, I explore the use of life history as a method of collecting data, the uses to which it has been put and how I employed it in my research. In the second part of the chapter, I discuss my personal experiences of engaging in life history research with one of the research participants in this study and the impact of this on my life.

PART 1

LIFE HISTORY AS A RESEARCH METHOD

The individual life history is 'an extensive record of a person's life told to and recorded by another, who then edits and writes the life as if it were autobiography' (Langness, 1965, cited by Geiger, 1986:336). The life history documents how individuals,

> interpret, understand and define the world around them ... the focus of the life history is paramountly concerned with the subjective meanings of individuals. Most notably it comes to lay bare the 'world taken-for-granted' of people - their assumptions and what it is they find problematic about life and their lives in particular (Faraday and Plummer, 1979:776).

The life history approach provides an insight into the richness and vividness of the life being studied. Holzberg (1984:262) argues that the 'life history allows one to gain access into the conceptual world of the individual', and to see how socio-economic and historical contexts affect the individual's life (see also Sikes and Troyna, 1991). Through the life history method it is possible to examine a person's life experiences from within their view of the past, and to identify how those experiences influence their understandings of their present lives (Armstrong, 1987; Kohli, 1981). It can be argued that such a method presents one with the opportunity to understand better, 'the choices, contingencies and options given to the individual' by the society in which they live (Bogdan, 1974:4).

The life history method provides an opportunity for the researcher to critically examine at length and uncover hidden thoughts and the meanings a person gives to his or her life (Armstrong, 1987). It also allows multiple lives to be studied. Ultimately the life history is an approach which offers significance to the individual's own story and to the interpretations that s/he places on their own experiences as an explanation for their own behaviour (Fisher, 1991).

Life history and women

According to Graham the life history method is a good way of examining women's lives because it helps them to 'communicate the complexity of their lives' (1984:13) and reveal the unequal way in which they experience the world with men. In researching women's lives it is important to note that women's life histories:

> deal not only with the relation between the self and the social sphere, but also and above all, with woman's condition and with the collective representations of woman as they have been shaped by the society with which the woman being interviewed must deal. (Chanfrault-Duchet, 1991:78).

I would argue that in addition to the social construction of femaleness (hooks, 1989) black women also have to deal with racialized constructions of black womanhood and the lived experience of being black and female. This necessitates the need for life histories in which black women are able to offer their own perspectives, understandings and speak for themselves about their lives as black women, students and as teachers.

When women speak for themselves, they reveal hidden realities: new experiences and new perspectives .... (Anderson et al., 1990:95).

It can be argued that in using the life history method, 'dialogue is both the research tool and the research outcome', which enables the 'whys' as well as the 'what's' of women's experience ... to take shape' (Billson, 1991:211).

Life history and teaching

Goodson states that,

> in understanding something so intensely personal as teaching it is critical we know about the person the teacher is (Goodson, 1981, quoted by Goodson, 1994:31).

He argues that it is not possible to separate the person from the teacher. Middleton (1992) believes that the life history method is one way of demonstrating that studying and teaching are not fragmented from the whole life. Consequently, the type of teacher the individual becomes is partly influenced by her/his individual biography, beliefs, values, attitudes and views, the type of teaching courses that are undertaken, the experience of teaching practice and the interaction that the student teacher has with others. According to Middleton (1992) the life history method provides student teachers with the opportunity to interpret their early educational and teacher training experiences in their own words. She suggests that such interpretations would reveal how individual

experiences and teaching philosophies are shaped by wider forces, such as the dominant culture and power relationships of 'race', class and gender.

A number of authors have used life histories to understand teachers' identities, lives and careers (Sparkes, 1994; Woods, 1993; Casey, 1992; Middleton, 1992, 1989; Nias and Aspinwall, 1992; Nias, 1989; Measor, 1985; Sikes, 1985; Sikes, et al. 1985). However, there has been very little work done on student teachers. Knowles (1992) and Sikes and Troyna (1991) are two studies out of the few examples. In each of these studies the reader is able to see how personal identity is central to the work teachers do, the meanings that they bring to their daily and professional lives, and the impact of self development, socio-economic, political and historical changes on their identities as teachers.

Criticisms of the life history approach

The life history method has been criticised for several reasons. Etter-Lewis (1991) argues that life history conversations can be a way of hiding or 'screening out uncomfortable emotions that accompany painful experiences' (ibid:47). My own experience of gathering life history data with the black women in my study and the kind of information that was revealed to me, indicated that rather than life history being a deliberate attempt to hide or suppress 'uncomfortable emotions', it was a way of bringing to the surface emotions which had often been subconsciously buried over a number of years. This point is explored further in the second half of this chapter.

Another criticism that has been levelled at the life history method is that the amount of data that is produced serves to restrict the number of people that can be researched in this way, and that it makes generalisations impossible. It is true that the amount of data produced via the life history process makes it difficult for an individual researcher to research several lives in this way. However, I disagree that generalisations from multiple biographies are impossible. Armstrong argues that 'it is possible to generalise to one type by showing that several life histories are basically similar' (1987:17). Bertaux has similarly suggested that recurrent patterns 'yield ... a direct access to the level of social relations which constitute ... the very substance of sociological knowledge' (1981:31). He argues that in his study of the bakers' trade there was no need to collect more than thirty life stories because by the twenty-fifth a clear structural pattern of the bakers' trade had emerged.

> When the interviews bring again and again the same elements of a recognisable pattern, when subsequent interviews with new persons confirm its presence in every life, then the pattern may be considered not merely fantasy of the researcher ... but a structuring feature of the actual process (ibid:134).

Bertaux (1981) also argues that life history studies are representative at the sociological (theoretical) level. I would argue that whilst my study of eighteen black women student teachers may not be considered representative of the total population of black women primary student teachers, the data that I collected provides a valuable insight into the experiences of black women student

teachers and the roles they adopt as practising teachers. Incidentally, it is worth pointing out that it is possible to theorise from one life history study and one can also generalise from the developed theory (Becker, 1970).

The life history method is considered by some to be methodologically unsound for the reasons described above and because it is often difficult to verify subjective accounts. But Faraday and Plummer argue that:

> the life history technique is grounded in a pragmatist approach to knowledge in which the ultimate test of truth is experience. The life history technique ... is not so much concerned with grasping the totality either of structures or personality as they are concerned with depicting the immediate lived experience as actual members in everyday society grasp them. These experiences shift and change from context to context, and the criterion of truth here is the grasping objectively of these experiences. Hence one may be objective in one's portrait of the truth of any world view, but this is not to say that this world view makes any claim to being any kind of universal truth' (1979:779).

Hammersley (1992) is particularly critical of researchers who believe that the life history method gives direct access to the reality of what actually happened, or to people's lived experience. He contends that as the life history is based on social (re)construction the potential exists for 'error as well as truth' (ibid:193) in the process of re-telling. However, this criticism can be levelled at any

kind of research. Surveys, for example, use questionnaires as their main source of collecting data. Questionnaires are usually designed with 'closed' questions which offer respondents a selection of 'fixed-alternatives', for example, 'yes, 'no', or 'don't know' answers (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1983). 'Closed' questions leave little, if any, room for respondent elaboration. Respondent elaboration is often necessary where the 'fixed-alternatives' that are offered do not fit in with the individual's experience of the topic under investigation. As with other data collection methods the life history is not problem free, but it can be argued that the life history process allows one to probe at length especially where further explanation is essential to developing a wider understanding, or where doubts are raised in the mind of the researcher about the truth of a participant's response.

While it may be considered difficult to substantiate the subjective accounts of the women I interviewed without having had access to their personal documents, letters, or observing their everyday institutional and teaching practice experiences, I found that some of the stories that I was told with regard to the women's institutional experience at Rosehall College was verified firstly, by the author and secondly, by another's telling. For example, some of the women referred to events which had taken place during lectures and seminars (at which other black students were present) and on each occasion the telling was the same in relevant respects. If these occurrences were untruths or glossed over, they could not have been remembered and told in the way that they were. It could be argued that events whilst experienced individually, were often apparent to others and so the potential for misrepresentation on the part of the narrator was minimised. In addition to the above, I found

that the women's experiences, whether verified or not, formed part of a pattern of their overall experiences in ITE and qualified teaching. This pattern suggested that such experiences were a feature of black women's ITE and qualified teaching experiences, and were 'not merely fantasy of the researcher' (Bertaux, 1981:134). At the end of the data collection period the women were asked to summarize their ITE and qualified teaching experiences. Many went into the same detail about those and other life experiences, that they had given in the original accounts. This serves to illustrate that no-one knows their own history like the individual concerned (Kohli, 1981).

It is important to stress that even though there is anxiety over researching lived experience, the fact that it produces subjective knowledge is not sufficient grounds for dismissing data derived in this way, or for treating all subjective experience as untrue. Dilthey (1985) believed that it was only in thought that the subjective becomes objective.

> A lived experience does not confront me as something perceived or represented; it is given to me, but the reality of lived experience is there-for-me because I have a reflexive awareness of it, because I possess it immediately as belonging to me in some sense. Only in thought does it become objective (Dilthey, 1985; quoted by Manen, 1990:35).

In other words the individual becomes more aware and objective about their life as they reflect on it. Through subjective experience it is possible to find objective meaning. I would argue that the

women in this study were interviewed in sufficient detail for their statements to be considered a full representation of their views and experiences.

THE RESEARCH

The choice of institution and research participants

Prior to commencing this research I was employed by Rosehall College of Higher Education. As I already had access to this institution I thought it would make sense to base my research there and to try to collect my data from the black women students enrolled on primary teaching courses at the College.

In October 1990, 661 students were registered to do the Primary and Secondary Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree courses across Years One to Four, and 81 students on the one year Primary and Secondary Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses. Out of the total students in ITE, twenty-four were from minority groups. As the intention was to explore the specificity of black women's experiences in primary ITE, the two students who were doing the secondary B.Ed were eliminated from the possible number that could be involved in this study, and two male students doing the primary B.Ed degree were not asked to participate for the same reason. There were no black students on the secondary PGCE course at the time.

There were twenty remaining possibilities for inclusion in this study. Rosehall College had initiated an experimental form of ethnic monitoring with students who began their courses in 1990. Twelve

students were identified via the ethnic origin they highlighted on their initial application forms. There were no records of the ethnic origin of students who began their courses prior to 1990. In order to find out the ethnic identity of these students I asked staff members if they had any black students in their classes. I was able to identify four black students myself from my previous contacts with them. Each of the twenty students were contacted to cross check their ethnic origin, to ascertain their gender and to establish if they were willing to participate in this study. Two students declined to be involved.

At the beginning of December 1990 a list of all the 661 students' names and their course specialisms was made available to me from student records. The eighteen initially identified black students were contacted again to explain the research design, my intentions and to see if they were still willing to participate in the research. They were also asked if they knew of other black students in their year or specialism group who might be interested in taking part. No other black students were identified, apart from the two male students who had previously been omitted from the research. As a member of Rosehall College I came into daily contact with the primary B.Ed and PGCE students. From my own observations I was certain that the students I had identified for my study were indeed the total number of black students on the primary B.Ed degree and PGCE course.

The final number therefore was eighteen black women - thirteen B.Ed and five PGCE students. They were subdivided as follows: eight South Asian, nine African-Caribbean and one African. Twelve of the women came from working-class backgrounds and the other six

were middle-class. At the start of the research, nine of the women were unmarried, seven were married and two were divorced.

Research design

A longitudinal research method was employed whereby each of the eighteen students were scheduled to be interviewed twice during each of their academic years, over a period of between two and three years from December 1990 to December 1993. The length of student participation depended on the type of course the student was doing when the research commenced and the year of student study. Seven students began their B.Ed course in October, 1990 and so they participated in the study as first, second and third year students. Two B.Ed students were in year two. One student was interviewed during her second, third and fourth years, and the other student was interviewed during her second year only as she failed both her second year exam and the re-sit. Two B.Ed students were in year three. One was interviewed during her third, fourth and post-qualifying year and the other student was interviewed during years three and four only, as she went to teach abroad after qualifying. Two B.Ed students were in year four when I began my research so they were interviewed during that year and at the end of their first year as qualified teachers. The same procedure was applied to the five PGCE students who began their course in 1990. For these particular students the intention was to see if there were any differences between their experiences as students and their experiences as qualified teachers.

Whilst I awaited confirmation of the total number of black students on ITE courses at the College I began interviewing the black women who were already known to me. I had initially approached these students with my research proposal earlier in 1990 to see if they would be interested in being involved in such a project. These interviews provided me with the opportunity to try out my interviewing techniques.

Data collection

a) *research relationships*

Feminist research has a wide focus and is informed by political commitment. It aims to be ultimately liberating. As life history research is premised on human experience it is a method which many feminists have used. Feminist researchers (and critical theorists) have been critical of traditional hierarchichal research relationships which usually exist between researchers and research participants (see for example, Stanley and Wise, 1993, 1983a; Finch, 1984; Oakley, 1981). Feminist researchers argue that it is essential to employ feminist strategies in researching lived experience, in particular women's experiences. Thus, they advocate the adoption of a non-hierarchical participatory research relationship. An example, of the rejection of hierarchy in research relationships is given by Oakley (1981), who argues that researchers should share personal experiences with their informants and give them any help that is requested. Song (in Song and Parker 1995:249) considered it necessary to disclose personal information about herself in order to 'encourage a more open interview'. Ribbens, however, highlights

the difficulties that can arise from such disclosure - 'it does seem to me that to talk about yourself completely openly in an interview situation might significantly shift what is said to you, in fairly unpredictable ways' (1989:584). Harding (1987) has suggested that researchers should include themselves in the research focus.

> The best feminist analysis ... insists that the inquirer her/himself be placed in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter, ... That is, the class, race, culture, and gender assumptions, beliefs, and behaviours of the researcher her/himself must be placed within the frame of the picture that she/he attempts to paint (Harding, 1987:9).

In this way both the researched and the researcher contribute to the research project. Feminist researchers have also argued for more egalitarian research relationships because they believe that this will encourage research participants to see themselves as more than just objects of the research process.

A participatory non-exploitative research relationship (Mies, 1983; Oakley, 1981) is considered essential when life histories are being obtained as this particular method necessitates interviewing the participants on several occasions for long periods of time. This type of relationship is also considered important because it serves to ensure that the research participants do not feel that what they discuss, or how they think is being imposed upon them, or that something is being taken away from them without them receiving something in return. It is argued that they should feel able to give of themselves freely in the research process without feeling

compromised. However, Hammersley (1992) argues that it is impossible to achieve a non-hierarchical participatory research relationship because it is the researcher who initiates the research process, the focus of the study, the format that the data collection and research report takes, and the interaction between the researcher and the subjects. In other words the researcher has the ability to 'exert control' over the research relationship (ibid:196). I will explore this particular aspect of the research process in detail in the second part of this chapter.

In the following sections I outline how I collected my data and the techniques I employed in my life history interviews.

b) *interviews*

At the outset of the research each person was promised confidentiality and an assurance was given that I would use pseudonyms in the research report.

The black women student teachers in this research were able to tell their life stories orally in an uninhibited and relaxed way because I did not impose a rigid structure (as one might get in a questionnaire or structured interview) on the women. The women were merely asked to tell their story in their own words. Although the women were given the freedom to 'steer the conversation' (Hakim, 1987:27) some of them asked me what I wanted to know. I replied that I wanted to hear whatever they were prepared to tell me about their experiences and development as women and student teachers. Many began by telling me about their ITE experiences and then worked

their way back into their past. I found that narratives of racism experienced during teaching practice, for example, triggered memories of racism in the women's earlier schooling and in adult life outside teaching. It was noticeable the extent to which those who were born abroad contrasted their negative experiences in Britain with positive experiences in their country of origin. Some of the women started with memories of happy events and let their lives unfold accordingly. Others commenced by telling me why they wanted to teach and why they had chosen to study at Rosehall College. In subsequent interviews the women informed me about their ITE or qualified teacher experiences and other life experiences.

Bertaux (1981) regards the life story interview as the result of interaction between the teller and the recorder, but at times I found the only interaction I had with the women was when I smiled or nodded to acknowledge that I understood what had been said. On many occasions I was the 'co-pilot along for the ride, giving assistance and direction only when necessary' (Fisher, 1991:22). I made 'no evaluations which aroused defense or which shut off expression' (Jung, 1953; cited by Holzberg, 1984:263). If I asked a question it was to elicit elaboration, or to make sure that I understood what had just been said. There were some women who talked to me for hours at a time as if we were old friends and I already knew everything about them. They pre-empted any questions that I might have asked by going into immense detail about their lives. It might be argued that whilst people will quite happily talk about the positive aspects of their lives they might not be so eager to talk about negative aspects. However, I found that the women were not afraid to

share their inner thoughts with me. For example, one woman had experienced domestic violence and had had two forced abortions. Another had left her husband after three days of marriage, and the childhood experiences of one woman were so bad that she welcomed going into a children's home. On the one hand, I would argue that the protection confidentiality offered these women enabled them to be extremely open about their life experiences. On the other, I would say that four of the women would have been very open regardless of confidentiality because they had reached a stage in their lives (in terms of maturity and self confidence) where they were 'not afraid of any moral or value judgements' that I might have applied to their life stories. It was their life as they had experienced it and they felt that there were positive as well as negative aspects in all our lives. They argued that in each of our lives there are likely to be happenings which we regret but as many are unavoidable they should be viewed in that context.

Each interview lasted between one and a half to three and a half hours. There were times when I interviewed for four and a half hours. This was however, during crisis periods in the women's lives. The interviews were conducted in the women's homes, student residences, in unused office space in the College and on two occasions on the College lawns. I tape recorded each interview with the permission of the students and later transcribed them. I chose to use a tape recorder because it enabled a permanent record to be kept and findings to be produced at a high level of detail which note taking makes more difficult (Hakim, 1987; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). I found the women were quite content to have their lives recorded and they did not find the tape recorder intrusive. There was

only one instance when I was asked not to record an interview but to write down the spoken words verbatim. The woman concerned did not give any specific reason for this. She just informed me that she did not want to do the interview in this way, even though she had previously allowed me to tape record her interviews. On this occasion I employed shorthand and longhand to help me in the recording of the data. One of the disadvantages I found in taking notes in this way is that the amount of information I was given prevented me from engaging in eye contact with the interviewee, and it made it seem as if I was a journalist just collecting data for publication. The interviewee also spoke slowly to accommodate my note taking. This made the interview process seem less natural. In conducting life history research I found the tape recorder to be invaluable. It enabled me to collect very detailed accounts of the women's lives. However, when it came to transcribing the information I had recorded I realised that there was much more data than I could possibly use in the research write up. Despite this, I would argue that the advantages of tape recording far outweigh the disadvantages (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983).

In between interviews the women informed me of major events in their lives such as marriage, birth, bereavement, serious family illness, or any incidents in their ITE experience that they felt they needed to discuss 'immediately'. This happened mostly after a block teaching practice (see chapter four). This meant that some of the women were interviewed on several occasions rather than the intended twice a year. Informal meetings over coffee and lunch also added to the amount of data collected and increased the length of the transcription process considerably.

The women were given a transcript of their interviews for their confirmation (or rejection) of the content as being a full and accurate record of what they had said during the interviews. They were given the opportunity to make any changes they felt necessary to the scripts. In her study of teachers' careers, Sikes (1985) found this type of response validation useful. Although it can be argued that response validation allows research participants to present their data in a certain light or to query the validity of the findings (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983), by adopting this method I was able to see if my transcripts were accepted as being accurate and if what the women had told me was actually what they had intended to say. Only one woman made any changes to one of her transcripts and it was to correct the spelling of a place name.

It could be argued that the research participants would be unwilling to change information they had previously given if they knew it to be a falsehood. As it is extremely difficult to prove beyond doubt that a respondent has been truthful in their disclosures I adopted the approach taken by Dean and Whyte (1958) and Elder (1978), that is to accept that some statements are objective and others subjective. For example, family details, employment history, place names and the type of schools the research participants attended as children were taken to be objective information. However, the women's own school experiences and the ITE and qualified teacher experiences they discussed in particular contexts were viewed as subjective statements to very objective realities - compulsory schooling, College, teaching practice and primary school teaching. In this research I found that experiences of childhood, schooling, marriage, parenthood and teaching practice were different ways of demonstrating that

'women's experiences are not facts without emotional commitment' (Currie and Kazi, 1987:78). Such experiences also emphasised that it is sometimes difficult to divorce the subjective from the objective.

Earlier I highlighted criticisms made by feminist researchers of hierarchical research relationships. I also made reference to the fact that Hammersley (1992) argues that such relationships are inevitable given the nature of the research process. While this may be true (this point is explored further in part two of this chapter), I believe that the women I interviewed were not inhibited by my approach as they contacted me on several occasions to tell me about something that had taken place in their lives (see above). For many of the women I was a 'sounding board', someone who enabled them to 'let off steam', someone they felt 'free and able' to talk to. If any of the research participants had felt oppressed by my approach in the collecting of their life story it would have been impossible to gather any data because they would have refused to talk to me. The level of rapport and understanding that was generated with all of the women leads me to conclude that the women were not hindered by the style I adopted.

> I really felt you understood me and you were always there for me. None of my family have given me that level of support, or have been able to because they really don't understand how I feel. (Yula)

Nor were they hindered by the life history process. Ella described in some detail what being involved in the research had meant to her.

I would say it's cleansing because it helps you to know yourself, to see where you have been and what you have done. Talking to someone you get it all out ... you're free because it's with someone else. So it's cleansing in that way. I think it's good in a sense to see where you've been in order to understand where you are now. It gives you the ability to look back and think of possible reasons for doing certain things, the situation as it was then, whereas at the time you were so close to it that you didn't. Perhaps it gives you a clearer way of knowing yourself, what you want and where you want to go. I don't think people actually look at things, evaluate or reflect on them in any way when they happen. They just carry on muddling through with their lives. Now I can say: "This is my hold on reality. I've come through this, so much". People don't really appreciate what you've been through. They say things like: "Oh married at sixteen, two children at eighteen it must have been hard", but I don't think they really appreciate what that meant. They say they understand the racist comments I had at school and how being unhappy at school must have upset me. Upset me, my god! I don't think they think, let alone understand. When you look back you understand this is what happened and this is what makes me who I am. This is why I am who I am. Looking back with someone else, talking to you, everything has come out. It's nice to let things go. You have to. I find it hard to let things go generally. I am very good at thinking things through and giving my reasons, but it's still mine if you see what I mean. Before I used to rationalise, write all my thoughts down on paper, draws full. If someone was upsetting me and I was really hurt by something they had said

I would write it all down and I'd file it away in a draw. Talking to you I don't need to write it out I can tell you and it's gone. It's not mine anymore ... it's made things easier telling you. I feel free now. I don't have that additional burden anymore. You helped to take that away. I can see where I am going now and where I have been. (Ella)

As a result of 'delivering' her life story to me it is possible to see that Ella, like Stanley, 'derived satisfaction' from somehow 'emptying a part of' herself (Stanley, 1993:212). All of the women found that the life history process had raised their consciousness (Stanley and Wise, 1983a; Roberts, 1981). As Olive, one of the women in this research said, 'it helps you to psychoanalyse yourself, explain your life as you become more aware and see which direction you should move in'. For others, the ability to review their lives that the life history method offered them was invaluable.

It's made me look very much on my experiences and make sense of them in a meaningful context in relation to who I am and where I've come from - my background, culture, colour and the relevance it does have and how it affects me. It's been really good, I've enjoyed it because it's like after a few years you can look back and ask, What have I learnt from this and what can I gain from it? In a sense it encourages you, it tells you not to forget who you are and the kinds of things that have happened that have made you into who you are and who you will be. I've found it invaluable in that way. (Sita)

I can say it has made me happy because I am more aware. You know so many things have to come to the forefront of my mind since I started talking to you and I think they will be there for a while. I'm sure some of the things I do in school from now on will be different as a result. Talking to you has made me address some of things that I've experienced, like racism. It's made me reflect and work things through. Helping me to reflect has shown me that throughout my education I have always been one of the few black pupils in my school. In most of my classes I was usually the only black pupil. Being at Rosehall has been the same with very few black students and the schools that I did teaching practice in were majority white schools. It's helped me to explore the anger that I had hidden concerning those experiences and my feelings about being a black woman, a teacher. (Chloe)

It's been good because it makes you sit down and think. Usually you don't tend to think at length like that. You think of the year and what's been good about it or what's been bad about it. Doing this you get a chance to talk it over with someone else. I have never really talked to anyone about my early educational experiences or my cultural background. But with you I can see how they have affected my educational achievements, my life and how I see myself as a teacher. (Zaria)

In all of the interviews it was evident that the life history process provided these women with the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and the meanings they gave to certain aspects of their

lives. It also helped them to understand their lives better and to put them into context. Examples of the extent of the women's reflection can be found throughout this thesis. From the above it can be argued that the research relationships I established with the women were participatory as we both gained: I gained data for my thesis and they a different perspective on their lives.

c) *questionnaire*

In May 1992 after attending a conference on teacher narrative and life stories, and hearing Lewis's (1992) account of the type of autobiographies his student teachers had written, I decided to introduce a written autobiographical element into my research. I asked the research participants if they would be willing to write their own individual educational autobiography. I explained what such a task would involve and the women agreed to 'try'. I hoped that the writing of their autobiographies would enable me to discover if the autobiography they wrote about themselves was in any way different to the story they had told me. It was also a way of finding out if they had remembered anything in the writing of their stories that they had forgotten on the occasions when they had spoken to me.

Giroux has argued that student teachers should be 'given the concepts and methods to delve into their own biographies, to look at the sedimented history they carry around' with them (1982, cited by Middleton, 1992:19). The students were given a formative framework as used by Lewis (see Appendix) to guide their autobiographies. With hindsight I realise that the questionnaire was too lengthy and

actually increased their fears about completing what was considered to be a 'daunting' task. Only two questionnaires were answered. The two women reported that once they had started to put their thoughts down on paper they became so 'engrossed' in their lives that it was difficult to stop writing. It is worth noting that these two autobiographies did not provide any additional information or detract from the spoken text I had recorded. In fact, it was just as if I was reading the oral stories that I had recorded with these two particular women.

The students who did not attempt the writing of their autobiography cited heavy workloads and family commitments as contributing factors. It is possible that these women were put off by the length of the questionnaire and the amount of time they envisaged they would have to spend writing about their lives. Two students had family bereavements and family illnesses to contend with but, for most, telling was easier than writing (Manen, 1990).

> I kept putting it off because I couldn't stop thinking about what I wanted to write. There was so much that I had to think about. I got so bogged down in thinking that I never actually got anything written down. I did write a couple of paragraphs and that was it... I think if you had asked me those questions while I was sitting by you it would have been easier. I would have thought them through and answered them there and then. Let me explain. Since I've been at college I have been getting good marks and I have been thinking why did I have to wait until now to realise my ability. I went to a grammar school, so why was it never recognised that I had got this

ability? I feel quite angry about it in some ways. I feel I wasted twenty odd years before finding out that I am quite capable. It didn't just come from nowhere it must have been there all along. Yet it was never noticed before. Thinking about issues like that I really found it hard to write about them. I think I just found it easier to explain myself by talking about it rather than writing. (Bev)

Bernice explains the contribution that such additional research data might have provided.

Although I didn't write anything it was useful to think about my life like that. It made me think a lot. I had forgotten a lot of things. I remembered things that had happened at school that had influenced my choice of career and things that I hadn't thought about when I had spoken to you previously. For example, I became a costumier because our English teachers had taken us to see St. Joan in London and it really had an effect on me. I thought the costumes were fantastic. I had never seen anything like it because I had never been to the theatre before. I had a chance to go back stage and I saw people rushing about and I thought "Wow! this is the atmosphere I want to be in". That experience had a great influence on what I felt I could do when I left school. ... I found talking to you interesting, very interesting because I don't think a lot of people think about their lives and education, their courses or their roles as teachers. Talking to you and trying to write made me realise ... where my

> philosophies on child education and development have come from and even bringing up my own children. (Bernice)

Quite naively, I had expected the research participants to put everything down on paper. After a year of waiting I decided to use the same format and write my own autobiography. I was dumbfounded by my own inability to write. The process of writing only surfaced after weeks of soul searching. My own initial inability enabled me to understand the kind of dilemma with which I had presented the research participants. I came to realise that facing one's past, examining its effects on one's present life can be exhilarating, traumatic, but it is one of the most difficult tasks imaginable (see Maylor, 1995).

> Until I began to try and write an autobiography, I thought that it would be a simple task this telling of one's story (hooks, 1989:155).

d) *additional sources of data*

In addition to the interviews, I recorded in my research diary my impressions as to how I felt each interview had gone. I also kept a journal of my own development as a researcher and how the chosen research method and the research process, impacted on my own life and everyday understandings of being a researcher (aspects of this are included in part two of this chapter).

My contact with students after their teaching practice highlighted the significance of teaching practice to what it means to be a black

woman student teacher in Britain. I therefore asked to see teaching practice reports which I hoped would highlight some of the events that had taken place during teaching practice. This kind of triangulation (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Denzin, 1978) illuminated further the type of ITE experiences black women student teachers had in each of the student years and how they developed as teachers.

Disadvantages of using life history as a method of collecting data

In researching an individual life the researcher usually seeks to support or verify the subjective account they have recorded by interviewing people associated with the subject (friends, family, teachers, employers), obtaining documentary evidence, for example, letters and reports, or observing the individual in different social settings (see for example, Plummer, 1983; Faraday and Plummer, 1979). One of the disadvantages I found in using the life history method to explore multiple lives is that the sheer volume of text yielded and the number of hours (hundreds) that this translates into in terms of transcription, necessitated restrictions being imposed on the collection of supporting data. Consequently, I did not investigate or seek to establish the views of headteachers, or supervising class teachers involved in the student teachers' individual teaching practices, or speak to staff within Rosehall College who had an active role in the institutional experiences of the students. Thus the views presented in this research pertain solely to the women concerned. Despite the lack of additional data, I do not believe that the data I present is deficient. I am also mindful of the fact that whilst triangulation 'attempts to relate different sorts of data in such a way

as to counteract various possible threats to the validity of our analysis', it does not necessarily 'produce a more complete picture' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983:199). It is worth reiterating a view I put forward earlier by Bertaux (1981). He states that,

> when the interviews bring again and again the same elements of a recognisable pattern, when subsequent interviews with new persons confirm its presence in every life, then the pattern may be considered not merely fantasy of the researcher ... but a structuring feature of the actual process (ibid:134).

The pattern which emerged in the experiences of the students in this study was important in validating their statements. The women's statements were also validated by other black students who were present in any given situation at the College.

Before I outlined the benefits the research participants in this study said they gained from being involved in life history research. I also found that the life history method can have implications for researchers who become too personally involved in the lives of those they study. I personally experienced a number of difficulties as a result of engaging in life history research with these research participants. These are discussed in detail in part two of this chapter.

Data analysis

In doing qualitative research it became clear, as Bertaux (1981) and Armstrong (1987) argue, that qualitative data collection and analysis

are intertwined and that each influences the other (see also Strauss and Corbin, 1990). I found that concepts which emerged from the data, for example, 'being hard', 'culture', 'parenting', 'powerlessness', 'racism', 'survival' and theories about South Asian women being 'passive victims', or primary teachers being 'motherly', provided themes for further analysis of the data being collected. They allowed me to explore who identified, for example, with the 'teacher as mother' metaphor, and if it was relevant to black women's lives as students or as practising teachers. In exploring the texts in this way I was able to highlight areas for further research, identify new concepts which emerged as a consequence and develop my theories about black women and teaching. These concepts brought the attitudes, values and beliefs of the black women student teachers into sharper focus. For example, whereas one or two South Asian women had given the impression that they were 'passive victims' of patriarchal and cultural discourses during their first interviews, in subsequent interviews it became clear that they were actually 'creative agents' in their own destinies. Other South Asian women also contradicted the stereotypical notion of South Asian women being 'passive victims'.

The data collection and analysis developed as each interview was analysed for recurring themes and similar statements. If a viewpoint expressed in an interview did not concur with the previous one the research participants were asked to elaborate and explain what they meant in each case, to ensure that the participant's position was clearly understood and misconceptions avoided. This form of analysis made it possible to discard old theories and explore new ones as new themes emerged, or modify existing theories (Strauss and Corbin,

1990). For example, none of the women identified with the term 'black teacher' (see chapter four). Their rejection of this label forced me to consider the possibility that this was a misinterpetation, or a label that I had imposed on them. I went through their accounts several times, compared them with each other and highlighted statements which best described how they saw their roles as teachers. I then contacted the women again for further elaboration on this issue. The women wanted to be referred to as 'teachers' in the same way that white teachers are. They felt that calling them 'black teachers' would draw attention to their skin colour. This was something that they did not want to do. Subsequent conversations with the women allowed me to modify what I understood by the term 'black teacher' and why they had rejected such a label. In many instances the women's statements confirmed existing theories, for example, that racism exists in education. Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to this type of analysis as the 'constant comparative method'. From the above it can be argued that lived experience can be 'grounded' in theory by moving from one case to another through thematic 'theoretical sampling' and by making 'constant comparisons' (Manen, 1990; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Glaser and Strauss, 1968).

According to Bertaux, 'each life story, ... each piece of evidence should be made to contribute to the understanding of a given network of social relations' (1981:40). He believes that the analysis is not complete until the network of social relations has been fully understood. It can be argued that this type of analysis enabled me to develop a wider understanding of black women's lives as students and as practising teachers.

Having collected and analysed the data I organised the material for presentation through the use of common themes. It is important to note that although this thesis examined the experiences of eighteen black women, not all of their views are highlighted in each of the chapters. Chapter four is the only one which incorporates all of their views. As chapter five deals specifically with the experience of qualified teachers only seven women are referred to. The reason for some of the women's voices being absent from the other chapters is because I quoted those experiences which not only demonstrated the point I was making, but were representative of the women's general experiences and concerns. Although there were no significant differences in the women's viewpoints, I also quoted those which diverged from the norm.

RESEARCHING BLACK WOMEN: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE BLACK FEMALE RESEARCHER

The notion of a black person researching black people requires closer scrutiny. The women I interviewed regarded me as 'one of us'. They were willing to share their experiences with me because I had an understanding of what it means to be black and female in Britain. There was an assumption amongst them that the need for an elaboration of certain experiences, like racism and sexism, was often unnecessary because it was part of my experience too. It was also suggested that it was easier to talk to me because I am black.

> The fact that you are black did affect my openness because I knew you would understand if I had a racist experience. I mean you can't really understand what it's like, or how it

hurts, unless you've been through it. So I think you being black and me has meant that there was a greater understanding between two people, between both of us because we share so much, our experiences of the education system, society. I know I wouldn't have been so open with a white person. Do you understand what I mean? (Sita)

... sometimes you bottle things up and you don't have the chance to express them, or even if you can express them people won't appreciate them because they haven't had the shared experience.... It was easier to talk to you because I knew you would understand when I said I had experienced racism. If you think something has gone on and it was racist it's easier to talk to a black person because they'll instantly understand if it was racist or not. But if you tell a white person they tell you that the person might not have meant it that way. So you really have to go in-depth because they've never experienced it. I think it is difficult for them to understand and I think it is difficult to tell someone who doesn't know what it is to be black that you think a colleague or a member of staff has been racist. (Rita)

I don't think I did the research because you're black. But on the other hand I know that I would definitely not have gone and sat down and given the same information to a white person. I don't think they would have been able to value, or appreciate the information, or interpret it in the right way. If I was being interviewed by a white person, the things I've told you I don't think I would have got the same

understanding. They wouldn't have been able to identify with some of the comments I made, they would just tape it. I don't think they would have been able to appreciate it or interpret it in the right way. (Chloe)

Osler (1989) noted that black pupils found it easier to talk to black teachers about racism because of their shared experience of racism. In the same way that racial identities are fluid and complicated (see chapter three), the experience of being black and female is not the same for all black women, even if they belong to the same ethnic group. In order to avoid any misinterpretation on my part, whenever it was suggested that racism or sexism had been experienced, the women were asked to clarify their meaning. This invariably meant that they went into greater detail about the experience and as a result the learning process was enhanced.

Just as the women's assumptions that I shared their racial and gender experiences contributed to the relationships that developed in this research and the type of information that was revealed to me, notions of difference also impinged on the research process. Gita suggested that I was 'easier to confide in' because I was outside of her ethnic group. She saw me as someone who would not or was unlikely to judge certain aspects of her behaviour.

I think I might have told a white researcher about the things I've told you, like having a boyfriend but I wouldn't have talked to an Asian researcher. I would have felt like a naughty girl. The whole concept of having a double life you don't have that, you're supposed to be one or the other. If you had been

an Asian researcher I couldn't have talked about personal things outside of studying. I mean they might have been negative towards some of the things I have said. It wouldn't just be a case of someone making a judgement about what I have said, but someone who doesn't know me, but who knows my cultural background, yet doesn't know how my culture affects me individually, making judgements on the fact that, that's my background and that I'm going against it, without knowing about the other pressures on me. I think that's probably what I would have feared most. If you had been Asian I really don't think I would have talked to you because I couldn't have revealed my self to the extent that I have. (Gita)

Gita's statement above makes it clear that the desire of a participant to reveal personal information may sometimes depend on the ethnicity of the researcher, as well as the nature of the information. This would seem to support Song and Parker's (1995) viewpoint. They argue that,

> interviewees' attributions of difference or commonality, in relation to the researcher ... could affect what they chose to reveal ... as well as the manner in which they did so' (ibid:251).

In researching young Chinese people Song (of Korean-American descent) discovered that she was 'a 'safe' person to talk to' because she was 'neither the same (Chinese) nor totally different (e.g. white)' (Song and Parker, 1995:248). Song and Parker (1995) provide interesting commentary on how respondents perceptions of cultural

identity can shape the research process, especially 'where the researcher and the interviewee share the same or partially shared racial and/or ethnic background' (ibid:253). Song also draws the reader's attention to the fears both she and her interviewees had about being judged by the other on the basis of their cultural identity. Although Gita was the only participant who expressed concern about being interviewed by someone with the same ethnicity as herself, her comments help to illustrate that being black and female are not always 'safe' criteria for black women to participate in research conducted by black women.

In voicing her own anxieties about the attitudes and responses of black participants to black researchers, Blair states that the 'willingness of a respondent to give (reliable) information is influenced at times by political considerations as well as by questions of self-interest' (1995:249). Despite this, I would argue that being black and female enabled the women to be at ease with me, with the study, with the questions that were sometimes asked and to feel comfortable about what they revealed to me. Gita's willingness to talk openly to me because of my different ethnic background made me feel confident of the honesty of her responses. However, I believe that not being a South Asian woman had a bearing on how I approached the collection of the data with two unmarried South Asian women who lived with their parents. For example, before going to interview Gita at her parental home, I worried about how my presence would be interpreted by her parents and how researching Gita's views would be interpreted by them. As an unmarried South Asian woman there were certain cultural and patriarchal customs by which Gita was governed (these are discussed

in chapter two). Consequently, I tried to avoid interviewing Gita at her home. On one occasion there was no alternative venue available to us, so in order not to cause offence to Gita's parents I wore clothing which covered my arms and legs. As her parents were unaware of the very detailed personal, family and cultural information that Gita was revealing to me, at times we spoke in hushed tones and controlled our laughter. I was conscious of how the presence of her parents in another room and the type of information that I was recording actually made me feel during the course of the interview. I felt as if we were both being 'naughty', somehow telling tales out of school.

Although my ethnicity was different from Gita's, I was allowed access into her home because of my gender, but in the case of another unmarried South Asian woman I was denied access to her when I telephoned her home because her brother thought I was a male caller. On another occasion when I tried to make telephone contact with the same woman she asked me not to phone her house again because I was creating difficulties for her. She was having to go through the process of explaining who I was and not being believed. These two particular instances serve to illustrate that researchers need to have a wider understanding of the cultures and customs of those they wish to research before they begin collecting data. But this should not be taken to mean that different ethnic groups cannot research each other. In her attempt to highlight the dangers that can arise from researchers investigating communities to which they do not belong, hooks (1989) questions the 'authoritative' voice of the researcher and the use to which the research will be put.

When we write about the experiences of a group to which we do not belong, we should consider whether or not our work will be used to reinforce and perpetuate domination [or maintain stereotypes about certain groups] (hooks, 1989:44).

I am aware of my limitations in researching ethnic groups to which I do not belong, that I will never know what it is like to be a South Asian or an African woman. However, being African-Caribbean doesn not mean that I understand everything about being African-Caribbean. As with other groups there are many similarities and differences between African-Caribbean's. Edwards (a white woman researcher) was concerned that her 'assumptions about black women's family lifestyles and cultural practices might be based on false understandings' (1990:483). I acknowledge that my outsider status prevented me from having a real understanding of the cultural difficulties some of the South Asian women in this study faced and could have affected my interpretation of their cultural experiences. Although there are certain aspects within each of the women's lives reported in this research which as a black woman, I can identify with, this does not mean that I have a more authoritative voice to speak for or on behalf of these women. Ultimately that belongs to the women themselves. As subjects they are the creators of their own knowledge and lives. I would suggest that in order that existing stereotypes are not reinforced or fodder provided for dominant power relationships to be maintained, that researchers question stereotypes and dominant structures and be honest about their own biases (wherever they may exist). It is important to note that everyone has biases which they bring to those they study because each person is affected by the environment

s/he engages in and everyone brings their personal histories into the research process. As researchers we should ensure that we are honest about our findings, that we do not offer them as the whole truth or as being able to speak for everyone, and above all, that the way in which we write up our research findings do not present minority groups as 'Other'.

END POINTS

The life history process provided me with an insight into the inner thoughts and experiences of the women in this research. As a researcher I witnessed and was a part of the process whereby the women tried to make sense of their lives as black women, as students and as practising teachers.

In the following chapters I outline the factors which motivated the black women in this research to enter primary ITE and their subsequent educational and life experiences. It is important to state that the women's experiences need to be considered within the context of the aim of the life history. Earlier I quoted Faraday and Plummer who argue that the life history is 'not so much concerned with grasping the totality either of structures or personality as they are concerned with depicting the immediate lived experience as actual members in everyday society grasp them' (1979:779). As previously stated, the life history method seeks to illuminate the individual's own account of her/his behaviour, motivations, intentions, attitudes and the meanings they give to their life experiences. This is not to suggest that the experiences I shall outline are objective facts, or give direct access to the reality of what

actually happened (Hammersley, 1992), but to emphasise that the women's subjective accounts represent their experiences, that is, their interpretation of events and their perceptions of what happened. The understandings that I have developed about black women in ITE and primary teaching are indeed partial, but as a final comment, I would like to point out that the women's own 'definition of the situation (and their experiences - my addition) is an important element of any social process, even if it does not provide a complete account or explanation' (Hakim, 1987:26). Indeed, as Becker reminds us, 'in the empirical sciences there is never compelling proof, there is only plausible proof' (quoted by Gillborn, 1995:54).

PART 2

RESEARCHING BLACK WOMEN: EXPLOITER OR EXPLOITED?

INTRODUCTION

In the first part of this chapter I explored how I conducted my research and the type of research relationships that developed between the research participants and myself. In this part of the chapter I explore my personal experiences of conducting life history research.

I have spent a considerable amount of time pondering if I should actually disclose my personal experiences of researching black women. Harding (1987) acknowledges the importance of self reflexivity in research but objects to research which overwhelms the reader with 'soul searching'. However, a perusal of the details of my journal notes confirms just how much I have been affected by the unintended consequences of my research method, and points to the necessity of extensive 'soul searching' in this particular study.

Self reflexivity provides us with the ability to monitor our actions as well as reflecting on our experiences and the particular roles we adopt in life (Hallam and Marshall, 1993; Cook and Fonow, 1990; Stanley and Wise, 1983b). The multiple roles that I occupied as a researcher and the impact of this on me make it essential that I share some of the dilemmas that I experienced during the course of conducting this research. A part of 'telling it like it is', for me means paying attention to incidents/events in my life which affected me

(Lather, 1988). In the following pages I reveal how the research process has affected me personally and I question the role of the researcher. Is it to be a researcher, confidante, counsellor, or all three? I begin by sharing some of the contacts that took place between me and the main focus of this section, Chenoa, over a period of six months. The name Chenoa is a second pseudonym for one of the participants in order to ensure that she cannot be identified in any of the chapters, or in any contributions that she made to this research.

Chenoa failed her second year B.Ed exams and her re-sit exam in September 1991. This meant that she could not continue her teaching degree. I spoke to Chenoa after she failed the first exam but I was unable to interview her until the October when she telephoned me to arrange a meeting with her. Prior to that she had been incommunicado.

DIARY ENTRIES

22/10/91

It's been a month since Chenoa realised she could no longer continue her B.Ed. Before her failure Chenoa had been negotiating transferring her studies to a college in London. I had expected to hear of her progress in this department. When I interviewed her yesterday I did not expect her to tell me the things that she did. I was so surprised, shocked. I never thought I would be hearing about childhood sex abuse (incest). I thought that she was just going to talk about how

she felt at failing her exams and having to end her teaching degree. Chenoa had bottled her feelings of anguish, disgust for many years. Although I admire her courage I wish she had said something before now. I have known Chenoa for a year now but she has never ever hinted as to the turmoil she was experiencing. I was totally unprepared for her revelations about her experience of incest perpetrated by her two brothers. Once she started talking I was dumbfounded, there was nothing for me to do except listen. I know life history research means delving into people's personal lives but I really didn't expect to hear anything like that. Chenoa had given the impression that she was happy and that her childhood had been happy. Perhaps this is what Etter-Lewis was referring to when she said that people sometimes used conversations as a way of 'screening out uncomfortable emotions that accompany painful experiences' (1991:47). ...

Yesterday's interview really taught me what it means to be a good listener. I am glad that Chenoa was able to confide in me. She said that I helped her to articulate what she felt and had been going through all this time. Chenoa is trying to get herself together but I am worried about her. Since September she has been taking sleeping pills and drinking heavily to help erase the painful memories that her exam failure had raised. The day before our interview Chenoa was almost run over as she tried to cross the road in a semi conscious state. When I arrived to interview her I got the distinct impression that she had been trying to overdose herself .... I'm distressed at having this additional information to deal with. What do I do

with it? Can I use it in the data? For what purpose? Am I responsible for Chenoa's life after college? ...

11/11/91

After the interview last month I never expected to hear from Chenoa again. Today she rang asking me to be her 'sister', to help her through her crisis. Her parents do not want to hear her 'stories'. They feel she is out to make trouble, split the family. Chenoa wants to understand what happened to her as a child and how her life has been affected since. But her parents do not want to know. She wants to find out who she is, know where she belongs. Chenoa was born in this country but she does not know anything about her parents lives before they came to England. She feels she is 'nothing' because she has no roots. She had been brought up to think of herself as a white middle-class child, living in a white middle-class area. Her father is a business man and her mother a 'suburban housewife'. Due to the environment Chenoa had grown up in she had spent most of her time trying to 'fit in' - into the wider society. ... Chenoa has discovered she has a hidden talent. She has started to express herself through poetry...

Chenoa wants me to be her 'counsellor' (whatever that means) as well as her 'sister'. There was nothing in my reading on life history research which suggested that researchers are ever asked to be counsellors. I don't even know what it means to be an effective counsellor. I don't really know how I can help. Yet I feel obliged to try. If it wasn't for my 'prying' Chenoa

would never have re-lived her childhood experiences. She definitely wouldn't be in this mess now...

16/12/91

Chenoa is desperate at the moment. She has taken to isolating herself in her bedroom and not communicating with other members of her family. She is going away for Christmas. Her parents are still unwilling to recognise that something that happened in the past can still be affecting her now. They would find it more plausible if she had spoken up at the time.

Now it's too late. Chenoa has decided to leave home...

1/1/92

Chenoa phoned me several times in December and would you believe it the very first day of the new year she rings again. What a way to start the year! I don't even remember what she said. I listened but I heard nothing. Is it possible to do that? It's got to the stage now where I am seriously questioning my role. I have gone from being a 'friendly ear' to a counsellor. At least once a week, sometimes twice, she thinks it's ok to ring me for an hour or more. I am becoming quite desperate. HELP! I spoke to my supervisor who advised me to get Chenoa to seek professional help but Chenoa feels she can only talk to me. I'll have to confront her about the extent of the phone calls. I hope she understands...

12/1/92

Chenoa phoned to see if I had received the poems she sent me. She wants me to look over them and give her advice about publishing. Chenoa has a desire to get everything down on paper that no-one else will listen to except me. She believes her father is listening to her phone calls. Is she being paranoid? Chenoa's isolation continues at home while other members of the family are continually being praised because of their achievements in education. Chenoa's father told her she is a failure, that she has let the family down and destroyed his hard work. Her mother cannot understand why she cannot get on with her life because one of her sisters who was also a victim of 'brotherly love' is leading a normal life. She failed to realise that Chenoa cannot progress in the present until she has come to terms with the past. I know Chenoa just wants someone to talk to but I am feeling pressurised by the constant phoning...

21/1/92

Chenoa is still ringing me even though I have put her in touch with organisations which I hoped could help her. All to no avail. She has no money, she can't afford their fees. But how desperately she needs professional help. I think Chenoa will continue to ring me unless I tell her not to. Perhaps I should just be truthful about how I feel. No I cannot, suppose that really destroys her? What will I do then? She just needs

someone to talk to. If she keeps it down to once a week I think I'll be able to cope...

12/2/92

Chenoa has finally found somewhere to live. She moved into bed and breakfast on the tenth. Now Chenoa is alone in the hostel she has even more time to ponder over her life. She is even more distressed because her parents have officially taken away their love from her. Believe it or not her mother has now threatened to kill her. Chenoa has finally got in touch with a group of incest survivors but she cannot afford their fees either. My heart skipped a beat when I heard that, I suppose it's up to me now. I'm not even sure she wanted their help...

20/2/92

Chenoa is becoming angry with everyone - her family, friends, even me. I listen while she shouts. I don't seem to be able to reach her...

1/3/92

Chenoa's sister died a week ago today. It was a tragic road accident. Chenoa must be going through hell. Her sister is going to be buried on Wednesday. They were close. Chenoa has spent the last week at home. She is angry at her sister for dying and at her father for wallowing in self pity. Although

she is angry she is happy that her sister has gone because she feels she is at peace now. Before she was depressed and lonely, just like Chenoa. Chenoa's emotions are all over the place - her sister was too young to die. I don't even know Chenoa's sister's name, I never thought to ask. The house is full of flowers, cards, neighbours ... Chenoa feels even more like an outsider now, the intruder. It's just one tragedy after another for Chenoa. Will she survive this latest one? Will I? ...

3/3/92

Day of the funeral. Chenoa argued with, and screamed at her father for making her abusers (her brothers) welcome in the house. Then she screamed at me for an hour and all I did was listen. Am I insane? ... One of Chenoa's brothers tried to make peace with her but she rejected him. Her father cannot understand why she is so angry at her brothers' presence. After all they have a right to be there. Suddenly the blame has shifted from her brothers to Chenoa. Her father regards her not wanting to return home as a rejection of the family. Yet it was they who rejected her...

19/4/92

I received a lovely letter from Chenoa today informing me of her progress - at last she is 'getting herself together'. Chenoa thanked me for 'listening to her, for being a friend, her sister'. Considering I was fed up of Chenoa ringing, it was nice

to receive this letter. It showed me that in spite of my own doubts I must have been doing something of value for her.

16/5/92

Slowly I've come to understand just how much Chenoa needed to express herself, to find her self. But if I hadn't interviewed her after she had failed her exams I would never have known how much she hurt inside. I would only have known the outside portrayal which was a representation of a happy go lucky black woman, not really interested in anyone or anything, except her music and teaching. Now I have seen a different side to her. She is like a child, a wounded animal - someone longing to be loved. Chenoa, more than anything just wants somewhere to belong. I am grateful that she believes she has found comfort, solace through me. But did I really offer comfort? I only ever remember being constantly annoyed at her intrusion into my life. I can't help wondering why my life had to become so entwined with Chenoa's. I hope the letter I got today will be the end of her calls. I live in hope....

COUNSELLING: A RESEARCH ROLE?

Before we commence our research projects I do not think that we can ever fully comprehend the difficulties that we might encounter during the course of our research, or the possible implications for ourselves of adopting certain research methods. The nature of life history research means opening up to public scrutiny deeply

hidden feelings, painful aspects of a person's life which sometimes requires the listener to be extra sympathetic, but I never imagined that life history research would constitute counselling. Winstanley (1992) found that some research participants see the researcher as a counsellor. But Cotterill does not believe that 'the researcher has any role as a counsellor' (1992:598). Sometimes, however this role is thrust upon you. Throughout the course of my research I have found myself, like Ladner (1987), at times being asked to act as a counsellor and to offer sisterly advice.

Talking about one's self can be therapeutic (Woolfe et al., 1987). Oakley suggests that in certain types of research there is a need for a 'therapeutic listener' (1993:236). This is a need which is often not met by family and friends. What does it mean to be a 'therapeutic listener' and what type of listening will suffice in research contexts? Counsellors are meant to be non directive. It is the counselled who are supposed to make their own decisions about what action to take. The extent to which an untrained person can be expected to counsel effectively on issues such as incest needs to be questioned. How does one respond to tales of incest without revealing one's feelings on the subject and in a manner which will benefit the counselled? I concur with Lopata who writes that it is 'difficult to be faced by a respondent ... who is so obviously in pain or need and whom we are not trained to help' (1980:78).

I do not want to overstate the extent of my research counselling role, often this has been no more than applying an attentive ear with little verbal communication at the end of a telephone. However, as researcher, confidante and counsellor I often felt emotionally

drained. With Chenoa my willingness to listen resulted in my personal involvement in her life beyond what I had ever anticipated. This additional role created pressures on me which were unforeseen at the beginning of my research project. The following is an another example of the kind of dilemma that I was faced with.

2/12/91

Chenoa rang to inform me that she believes her doctor who has been trying to help her by listening to her, wants her for himself. But instead of getting her to explain how she feels about her earlier incest experiences and helping her to work through this, he was 'getting off' as she called it, on what she was saying about how she feels about sex. As she cried he was 'touching' her - putting his arm around her in comfort perhaps? There is a possibility that she misinterpreted his attempts at consoling her as sexual. 'No!' she says. The doctor even told her to try and masturbate to overcome her sexual fears. Was the doctor trying to help her? Did he want a relationship with her? He had phoned her at home to arrange an out of surgery meeting. Was this normal practice? The doctor had driven her home because she was in an extremely distressed state. Chenoa said he had 'tried it on' with her. She wondered if she had done anything to arouse him. Was it something she said, what she wore or the way that she looked at him? Had he misinterpreted her desire to talk? Should she tell his wife? What would she gain from this? Now she's even suggesting that she needs to change the way that she dresses. These apprehensions are all tied up with other situations she

had found herself in with men and her anxiety and anguish over family rejection. Men had taken 'advantage' of her before so why shouldn't this doctor now? Do I believe all of this? What really took place? Has Chenoa told me everything? Has she got anything wrong? More importantly how can I move her forward?

I am not a sex therapy counsellor but I tried to deal with each of the above issues. Although Chenoa knew I lacked this skill she insisted that I help because she valued my opinion and my listening to her. I felt compelled to try, since help did not appear to be forthcoming from her family, friends or her doctor. Chenoa's semi alcoholic state and abusive behaviour had helped to push her friends away. They told her to 'pull herself together'. I did the best that I could in the circumstances. What Chenoa really needed was professional advice, but professional help was very costly and had to be arranged in advance. Even if she had found the means to pay, sessions of between twenty to thirty minutes did not seem sufficient. Someone needed to be there, day or night, as and when she needed to talk. I became that someone.

Oakley (1981) (a feminist researcher) argues that researchers should give support and try to help whenever it is requested. Although I concur that it is important that we try to give back to the research participants as much as we take away, I also consider this viewpoint problematic on the basis of my own experience. Sometimes a participant brings to the attention of a researcher problems which she realistically cannot solve, or for which she cannot provide support. I do not think that the real consequences of what help or

support actually means have been fully thought through by feminist researchers. As I understand it, feminist research should be seeking to 'change the position of women in society' (Riddell, 1989:85), but how do we know that the advice or support we may give is the most appropriate or that it will have the desired effect and elicit change? Although I do not claim to have conducted feminist research, I tried to adopt feminist research principles in my interviews with the research participants. With Chenoa I was a 'sympathetic listener'. I tried to understand her dilemmas, support her attempts in trying to come to terms with her experiences and her quest for self recovery (hooks, 1993; 1989). Feminist researchers do not suggest that researchers should aim to solve all of the problems they encounter during the course of their research, or attempt to work miracles. Nevertheless, I felt deficient because I was unable to ease Chenoa's pain, to provide practical solutions to her problems, or to accept her persistent phone calls without question. Chenoa longed for her family's understanding and love. I longed for peace, for someone to take away the problem that I had become involved in through engaging in life history research.

In her search for love and understanding Chenoa turned her attentions to me. I was to be her 'sister', 'counsellor' and confessor. I too became a victim of circumstance. I became a prisoner of my own making. I felt guilty, on the one hand, if I was out when she phoned; but trepidation, on the other, whenever the phone rang - just in case it was her and I would be held to ransom for one or more hours. Even prisoners should get time off for good behaviour. Unlike Stanley and Wise (1983b) I had encouraged the telephone calls - 'don't hestitate to call if you need to talk' - but I also resented them. I

had initiated the process of self questioning through her participation in my research project. I had triggered memories that she had subconsciously buried. I was called upon 'to listen' as childhood memories ignited with the failure of her second year B.Ed exams. Normalcy in her everyday life was further ruptured by a series of events. Rejected by family, friends and college - was I not responsible for her welfare? Should I have objected to the demands placed upon me? Was I justified in feeling pressurised? As a black woman I felt guilty that my research method had somehow contributed to another black woman's state of mind and in order to rectify this I felt I had to help in whatever way I could.

Oppressor/Oppressed?

Hammersley argues that the researcher has the ability to 'exert control' over the research relationship (1992:196). However, my researcher/counsellor relationship with Chenoa serves to illustrate how some research participants can exploit and 'exert control' over the research relationship, and how the researcher can sometimes be rendered powerless. Mies believes that researchers should include their 'experience of oppression' in the research process (1983:121). After six months of listening to and counselling Chenoa I began to regard her as an individual who in order to escape oppression needed to oppress someone else in return. I thought of her as a burden, a noose around my neck. After a year of the constant barrage of telephone calls we were almost like bed partners - except with bed partners you can choose whom you sleep with. I resented the imposition on my personal time, my private space. The added weight of feeling responsible for someone else's life made me ill

with worry. I always feared that Chenoa would take her life, either through the sleeping tablets she had been prescribed, or through her abuse of alcohol.

I had never expected to assume a dominant relationship with any of the research participants, since I believed that 'good' feminist research looked towards establishing a non-hierarchical participatory relationship (Oakley, 1993, 1981; Stanley, 1991) with all benefitting equally from the research process. Futhermore I took sisterhood to mean that we did not make any unnecessary or impossible demands on each other. I thought that I had managed to secure this type of relationship. I soon realised that I was wrong: Chenoa dictated the format of our relationship and my behaviour towards her. It was inevitable that she would phone for one reason or another, and whenever she did, I stopped whatever I was doing and gave her my undivided attention. Despite my longing to end the call I would quietly listen until Chenoa decided she wanted to speak no more. After every call I resolved that I would not put up with this any more, that I would tell her the next time she called that her reliance on me had to end. But like a child, I obeyed her every command and tried to help her as best I could, even if this only meant reading and responding to her written word, or passing on a telephone number of possible further assistance. Frequently, I pointed Chenoa in the direction of women's groups. Each suggestion was mulled over but was always dismissed. In search of her cultural identity she sought solace through writing poetry. I read, commented upon and explored her sense of identity as far as I could. I even visited Chenoa to give her moral support. But all of this was not enough. Still Chenoa demanded more. She needed a 'sister' and

had found one. Yet this was not a real sister relationship. My own sister has never made any of the demands that Chenoa made of me, no matter how difficult a situation or experience has been for her.

What was it about me that gave out signals to people that I was willing and able to help? Woolfe et al. (1987) argue that counsellors need to be sympathetic, genuine in their concerns and able to display empathy. I was too genuine in my concerns and not far-sighted enough to set boundaries as to what I was realistically capable of dealing with. I never evaded or refused to answer anything that was asked of me. For the first year after I had begun to counsel Chenoa I considered myself helpless, in fact, weak and pathetic. My assertiveness and ability to say 'no' had escaped me. I did everything I told other women not to do.

My inability to say 'no' did not only relate to Chenoa. I found myself trying to help other black women in situations where it was obvious that I had no power to change institutional practice. For example, in the attempt to get the College to reverse their decision and allow another black woman to re-sit her final exam after her course had just come to the end of its life, I wrote the letters I was asked to and spoke to the relevant people. All to no avail. I suppose I felt disheartened because the system had somehow failed this student and she had seen me as her 'only hope' - someone who could make her dreams come true. In studying American widows Lopata found that the respondents expected 'some sort of direct help as a result of the interview, a solution of problems and even a complete change in life' (1980:78). I was asked to help and speak on behalf of some of the women in this research on many occasions. The women saw me as

'one of us' and as 'one of us' they took it for granted that I would help to solve their college problems. They also believed that as a member of the institution I had 'powers' which they as students did not. It is true that I understood the workings of the system and had access to the College hierarchy, but the women overlooked racism as a structure which also prevents me from having any real power (for further discussion on the power of the black researcher see Blair, 1995).

Ladner argues that as researchers we should question to what extent it is possible to be 'dispassionate observers' without attempting to 'intervene ... to ameliorate many of the destructive conditions' we study (Ladner, 1987:79). Although I could never possibly change institutional practices or reverse Chenoa's childhood experiences, I tried to help all of those who asked for my assistance. With Chenoa I tried to help her to understand that her experiences of male oppression were not her fault and to explore her subsequent behaviour. Did I help or hinder? Her thank-you letters suggest I helped to raise her consciousness, to enable her to find her self and to survive on her own. I last heard from Chenoa in May 1994. She spoke of progress and happiness.

Thankfully, I eventually learned to say 'no', but it was too late to prevent my feeling of being oppressed and a victim of my own research.

Ethical dilemmas

My life became entwined with Chenoa's once I effectively became her counsellor - but my role as researcher did not end when the counselling relationship began. Was it ethical to continue to keep diary notes and document experiences during Chenoa's crisis period? Chenoa's life history and social reality did not end when her course did, but after that point was I not acting as a friend/counsellor? Did I over-step the boundaries of legitimate research? If Chenoa had not been involved in the initial process, my research role would not have entered into her life after college. Chenoa saw me as someone whom she felt could help her to come to terms with her past experiences, and her parents lack of understanding of the anguish she was experiencing. Above all, she sought someone who could point her towards recovering her self. My documentation of Chenoa's experiences in the subsequent years has constituted an essential part of my ability to help her to engage with her self - past and present - and to move her forward to a new self understanding. It has also enabled me to come to terms with the many difficulties I encountered in my research relationship with Chenoa.

Bhavnani states that the 'micropolitics of the research situation need to be analysed and not only noted' (1993:101). As a result of my experiences with Chenoa I questioned my relationship with the other research participants. I questioned whether I was becoming too personally involved in each of their lives, and whether they, like Chenoa, would demand something in return for their involvement in the research project that I could not possibly provide or fulfill. Furthermore, I was dealing with subjective life experiences and I too

played a subjective role. There was no distancing between myself and the participants. When they were affected so was I. Ladner (1987) questions whether anyone can be objective about racism or poverty. Can we be objective about human experience? I can only attempt as best I can to be an objective researcher. I am a product of the forces that have shaped me and these, together with my gender, class, ethnicity and my experiences have in turn informed my research topic and practice.

CONCLUSION

I do not know if my personal experiences of doing PhD life history research will be acknowledged as essential knowledge, but the naming of my own experience has been crucial to my development as a researcher and as a person. Within the context of my research I have discovered that there are many limitations to trying to maintain a participatory feminist research relationship. I have found that my research role has swayed between being a researcher and a counsellor. I unwittingly transgressed my main role, that of researcher. As a black woman I felt that I could not stand by without trying to help other black women, even if that help was only in the form of listening. Women, and in particular black women's subordinate position has been well documented (Essed, 1991). So I felt it was imperative to assist in any way that I possibly could. My experiences with the black women in this research, especially Chenoa, have not only demonstrated how much women rely on each other for help and support, but how we sometimes make assumptions about 'racial solidarity', something which might mean different things to different people (see Blair, 1995).

I know that the women who have come to me in their hour of need have appreciated my efforts, so why do I feel so frustrated? Perhaps because I have always known that as a researcher and student I could realistically solve nothing. Yet there is evidence that I helped. My probing of the women's experiences in teacher education has made a difference to them. Many have acknowledged my efforts through phone calls, personal thank-you cards and invitations to special meals at their homes in my honour. Despite all of this, I still feel that I was somehow exploited by the continuous demands placed on my time and resources by Chenoa. I never contemplated that my belief in feminist research principles would lead to my adoption of the counselling role, or lead me to perform many of the tasks that I did. There are many limitations to the researcher's role, counselling is the ultimate limit. Without question it is a boundary which ought not to be crossed lightly.

I have agonised over my apparent lack of ability to say 'no' to many of the demands which were made of me and to reject the researcher/counsellor role. I realise now that my tolerance of the requests for extra support from Chenoa and the emotional time that I invested in trying to help her, relate to my belief in the necessity of supporting and not exploiting those who are already exploited, or the communities that one researches. There is however, a limit to the amount that one can physically and emotionally take on. As I move out of my state of feeling oppressed/exploited I feel strongly that researchers should explore their own personal experiences of research in order that they do not fall into the same trap that I did. The emotional pressures that I experienced in trying to balance

personal need against feminist and ethical research principles should be avoided at all costs.

A valuable lesson that I have learnt in conducting life history research is that one needs to be more aware of one's limitations and the pitfalls of becoming too personally involved. If I was confronted with a similar situation again I would outline what I as a researcher have the ability to deal with and the boundaries that I would not be prepared to cross. Despite the difficulties that I personally encountered as a result of engaging in life history research, I have also found that as the process of my research has developed, so I have questioned my own life and as a result I too have grown. I realise now that as female researchers, or even as feminists, we do not have to accept without question the different demands or relationships thrust upon us by those we choose to research for the sake of maintaining feminist principles. Being a woman does not mean that one cannot say 'no' to other women; and, more importantly, being a black woman does not mean that one cannot say 'no' to other black women, or that one should feel guilty at not being able to share, or solve, all the problems that we meet along the way.

Finally, Stanley and Wise suggest that 'the personal must be included as much more than data fodder' in research (1983b:195). I shall end my disclosure by making a similar plea: that understanding how the research process illuminates our ways of knowing must be central to any research project. 'Soul searching' has a place in research.

CHAPTER 2

TEACHING AS A CAREER FOR BLACK WOMEN:MOTIVATING FACTORS

INTRODUCTION

The development of primary teaching as a profession for women might lead some to conclude that primary teaching is not only predominated by women, but that those who become primary teachers do so because they associate primary teaching with 'mothering' or regard it as a vocation for women. Burgess and Carter (1992) argue that many women enter primary teaching because of their gender, whilst the 'commitment to care' has been cited by Andrew Hargreaves (1994) as accounting for some women becoming early years teachers. It is evident that the 'teacher as mother' metaphor has relevance for some student teachers (Burgess and Carter, 1992) and that it is applied by some women in their teaching (Nias and Aspinwall, 1992; Bullough et. al., 1991; Miller, 1986). However, as a group, women do not become primary teachers because they want to adopt such roles in the classroom (Hill, 1994; Casey, 1990; Aspinwall and Drummond, 1989).

There are many reasons why primary teaching is chosen as a career. The most cited reasons are 'a liking for children and a wish to work with them' (Hill, 1994:16; see also Nias, 1989; Clarricoates, 1988). Other factors include, 'security, holidays, family connections with the profession, limited availability of alternative employment and financial independence' (Hill, 1994:17). Primary teaching has

also been associated with offering 'scope for self expression and the chance to use a range of abilities' (Nias, 1989:42). Aspinwall and Drummond found that primary teaching was chosen in preference to secondary school teaching because it provided the opportunity to cover 'all areas of the curriculum' (1989:14). It has been suggested that mothers are more likely to enter teaching because the hours of teaching enable them to accommodate the caring requirements of their children (Hill, 1994; Clarricoates, 1988; Miller, 1986).

In this chapter I explore the above assumptions. In order to understand some of the main motivating factors for the black women in this research I intend to look at their earlier educational and life experiences, and highlight aspects of their histories which led them to choose a career in primary teaching. In doing this, I hope to provide answers to the following questions: Does racism play a part in the career choices of black women? Is the 'teacher as mother' metaphor an important factor in black women's choice of primary teaching? Do black women choose primary teaching because of their gender? Are there any differences and similarities between black women's motivations for choosing primary teaching. Answers to these questions may give an indication as to how we might increase the number of black teachers within the profession.

WHY PRIMARY TEACHING?

Personal choices

a) *gender roles*

Biological differences between men and women have been used to justify the sexual division of labour in society. It is argued that it is 'natural' for women to rear children because it is they who bear children. However, the fact that only women can give birth is insufficient for 'allocating one kind of work to women and another to men' (Gittins, 1992:72). In looking at work historically and culturally Gittins (1992) notes that there are relatively few jobs which have been 'specifically and universally performed by either men or women' (ibid:72). Oakley (1974) and Rowbotham (1973) believe that the reproductive ability of women is only partly responsible for creating gender divisions in society. They cite 'the separation of the sphere of work from the privatised sphere of the home under the capitalist mode of production' (Oakley, 1974:59) and, the place of women in relation to capitalist economic production as other contributory factors. Industrialisation in Britain led to the economic dependence of women (as mothers) on men and childcare and domestic work being seen as the primary responsibility of women. Despite this, notions of women as carers and home-makers and conceptions of men as economic providers are social and cultural constructions. These constructions are also ethnically (Phoenix, 1992; Knowles and Mercer, 1990) and class based (Phillips, 1992). They are an endemic feature of patriarchal, rather than capitalist societies, and enable men as decision makers to maintain

power over women (through a set of social relationships), to restrict women's choices and contribute to the lack of access many women today have to paid employment outside the home (McDowell and Pringle, 1992; Walby, 1990). Women who would like to engage in paid work but cannot afford to pay for private childcare are further constrained by a lack of state childcare provision (Phillips, 1988).

This social construction of gender roles serves to ensure that women not only look after children in the home, but that they behave in ways which suit the interests of men in the labour market. Despite these difficulties many women combine parenting with paid employment.

b) *parenting*

The black women student teachers at Rosehall College gave several reasons for choosing primary teaching. For some it was the combination of their experiences of work and parenting which led to their choice of a career in teaching and which affected the timing of entry. In other words their gender played a part in their choice of career.

Although Bev had attended grammar school she did not do very well in her O-level exams. She admits that she could have done better but at the time jobs were easy to 'walk into' and she really did not have a career in mind. Bev's parents did not understand how the education system worked. They assumed that her teachers were encouraging her to do her best so they did not encourage her themselves. The secondary school Bev attended did not encourage parents to take an

active role in the education of their children. As a result Bev's parents were unable to give her the kind of educational help and careers advice that might have benefited her.

> Whereas today parents are more clued into what opportunities are available for their children and are supportive of them my parents had no idea of how to steer you into a career. It wasn't that they didn't want to help it was just that my school and parents did not mix. Mom only met my teachers when she had to go to school to hear what I had been up to. At school there was no discussion on education with parents, only discipline. That wasn't the parents' role. I don't blame my parents really because they were brought up at a time when there was a division, one area for parenting and one for schooling, with the two not meeting. So really my parents did not know how to help me. (Bev)

Bev married when she was eighteen. She worked fulltime as a computer operator until the birth of her first child. Then she worked as a shop assistant and spent many years doing the night shift in a tea factory in between the births of her other children. When Bev's youngest child was three and a half years old she decided on a change of employment. She did not want to spend the rest of her life working in a factory, so she opted for a job training scheme which lasted for six months. During this period she acquired word processing, typing, shorthand and basic accounting skills. Soon after that Bev gained employment as a book keeper. It was at this point that she decided that she wanted to become a primary teacher.

The training scheme made me realise that I could actually do something more with my life. I saw a brochure in the library on teaching. I liked what I read about primary teaching and decided that this was what I wanted to do. But I needed A-levels to do teaching so I had to go out and get them.

Bev cites a combination of factors as contributing to her eventual registration on Rosehall's primary B.Ed degree course: the completion of her A-levels, passing her driving test which enabled her to commute to a place of study daily, and being able to afford childminding fees whilst at college.

According to East and Pitt, 'a major motivating force' for black women who enter teaching is 'their experience of bringing up young children and their contact with schools' (1989:41-2). Bev wanted to become a primary teacher for several reasons. First, her interest in teaching had been stimulated by a brochure she had read on teaching. Secondly, her experiences of parenting and helping her own children with their homework encouraged her thirst for knowledge, and fuelled the belief that teaching was something she would enjoy. Thirdly, as a parent she had taken advantage of the opportunity to go into her youngest son's primary school and help children with their reading. Bev found being in a teaching situation 'exciting'. Fourthly, she cited 'getting on well' with children as another motivating factor. Burgess and Carter (1992) question what 'getting on' with children means. For Bev, it was 'having the ability to communicate with young children', in a way that they would understand and be responsive to.

It's very difficult to say why I wanted to teach or how it was formulated. I get on well with children, not only my own children but other people's children as well. My friends' children would always come home with me. There was a kind of rapport between myself and them. As my children were getting older and bringing their school work home I found that I was helping them with their work. It was really interesting. I also enjoyed being in school. I usually helped out in my son's school for one hour a week as a parent reader. I really enjoyed that. It was exciting being in a classroom situation. I thought that my own experiences of being a parent and my rapport with young children would help me to become a good teacher.

Although Bev links teaching with parenting she did not identify herself with the 'teacher as mother' ideology, or with adopting such a role in school.

Everyone talks about primary teachers as if they're only in school to mother young children. Some of my friends have even said this to me, but there is more to primary teaching than mothering. Going into my son's school has opened my eyes to how children learn and how hard teachers' have to work to help children to learn. I know that it is not mothering, it is about understanding the different abilities of children, the levels at which they learn and how that learning can be developed. I see myself helping children to learn, if I want to be a mother I can do that at home. (Bev)

Ranjit is another mother who had experience of working in her children's school. Her children attend a school for deaf children. Ranjit helped in whatever capacity that she could, for example, organising outings and fund raising events. Ranjit's enthusiasm for teaching was not fuelled by these experiences, but by her desire to develop a greater understanding of the learning requirements of her children. As a teacher she would be able to foster her children's learning and raise her own awareness of learning difficulties.

> My children need more help from me as a parent. They need more help than hearing children and I want to be able to help them. I can only help them if I know more about different teaching methods and children's educational development. Hopefully teaching will provide me with the ability to help my children more. (Ranjit)

Ranjit saw primary teaching as providing her with the opportunity to be more 'beneficial' to her children. In common with many households the responsibility for childcare lay in the main with her. Ranjit felt that she could put this quality time to better use if she became a teacher. After studying part time for six years to obtain her degree Ranjit applied to do the primary PGCE course at Rosehall.

Meleta, also a graduate, combined aspects of parenting and teaching her own daughter, with pragmatic reasons for a career change.

> After my degree I got a job as a technician in a science lab. Then I had my daughter and I found that I couldn't do nine to five jobs anymore. I was looking for a job that would fit in

with her holidays when she started school. I enjoyed teaching my daughter to read. I felt teaching was probably the sort of career that I wanted to do, that is teaching young children and working with them. I found working as a lab technician boring. It didn't stretch me enough. I thought by doing the PGCE I would get a better paid job, do a lot better in my field and get school holidays as well. Through having a child of my own I feel I know a lot more about children. So I thought I could bring that into teaching. (Meleta)

Meleta felt teaching could offer her educational stimulation as well as the possibility of accommodating her childcare needs.

Many of the reasons cited above are not dissimilar to those given by white women who choose primary teaching as a career (Hill, 1994; Bullough et al., 1991; Miller, 1986). This is primarily because it is women, and not men, who tend to have responsibility for childcare. The association of women with caring and the idea that the well being of the family is dependent on women fulfilling this role has been incorporated into government policies on state childcare provision (Phillips, 1988). The lack of affordable childcare and the lack of available employment which would enable women to combine childcare with paid work, has resulted in many women engaging in part-time work or seeking careers like teaching which allow them to accommodate their childcare needs (these points are explored further below under 'marital status').

Although black women share the experience of childcare difficulties with white women, the choice of primary teaching for black women

can also be attributed to other motivating factors. Migration and racism are two such additional factors.

c) *migration*

After migrating to Britain many overseas trained black teachers were unable to gain DES recognition of their qualifications and teaching status. It was suggested that their qualifications were not equivalent to those gained by British qualified teachers. It could be argued that this decision was racist as those most affected by it were teachers who had migrated from India, Pakistan, Africa and the West Indies (CRE, 1988). The lack of recognition resulted in many choosing alternative careers. Others persisted with trying to secure DES recognition but found themselves occupying permanent supply positions because they were unable to obtain that confirmation. Thus the black teacher population remained low.

This research includes two women who had previously trained as teachers in their country of origin. Rita and Jasmine migrated to Britain in the early eighties. Both sought DES recognition but this was denied for the reasons cited above. They enrolled for the primary PGCE course at Rosehall in order to have their teaching status acknowledged by the Department For Education (DFE - formally the DES).

Rita explained that although she trained as a teacher, teaching was not her first choice of career.

If I had performed brilliantly with A's and B's in my A-levels I would have gone to the local university in Singapore and perhaps settled into a comfortable job. But because I was not able to get into the university I went into another institution - teacher training. This was due to a lot of coercion from my folks at the time. (Rita)

Like many parents, Rita's parents had a gendered view of teaching. They thought 'it was a good job for a woman' (see Clarricoates, 1988). Rita's fondness for teaching developed as she realised that it could offer her financial independence and status. Status in Singapore was gained through employment. After qualifying, Rita taught primary and secondary aged children for eight years, then married. She found that she enjoyed teaching, that is 'helping children to learn'. At the same time she studied for a philosophy degree which she had always wanted to do. The desire to study philosophy was part of her 'deep curiosity, a search for something', which she confesses she still has not found.

After arriving in England it was some time before Rita realised that the DES were not going to recognize her teaching status or her degree qualification. Rita applied to teach part-time whilst she awaited the DES's decision, but she was rejected on the basis of her presumed inability to cope with both her teaching and childcare demands.

I wanted to get back into teaching as quickly as possible. I told them I was willing to make all the necessary childcare arrangements but they turned round and said that they didn't

think I could cope with teaching and looking after the children. I found that annoying because they were making the decision for me.

Rita was astounded by her rejection as she had successfully performed parenting duties alongside her teaching commitments in Singapore. The patriarchal notion that childcare is the responsibility of women has often been used to frustrate women's teaching careers (Acker, 1987). However, it is noticeable that at times when women's economic participation in the labour force is needed, for example during wars, such arguments are not put forward (Miller, 1992; Walby, 1990).

After several rejections by the DES Rita became fearful that she would never teach children again. As her own children were still young she ran a play group for five years. In the meantime she did several courses, for example, a Pre-school Playgroup Association certificate, Teaching English as Foreign Language, a City and Guild's further education teacher's certificate, hairdressing, tennis and tailoring. Rita also learnt Italian. Then she turned to adult education and taught English as a foreign language and adult literacy and numeracy for two years. Rita's choice of adult education was prompted by a desire to return to teaching. She also saw foreign students as 'keen to learn' whereas British school children appeared to be 'unruly and difficult to discipline'. Rita's determination to continue teaching and her perseverance in studying and doing a variety of jobs shows the lengths that women will go to, to get some freedom and independence.

Rita's husband was quite prepared to maintain her as long as she fulfilled her responsibilities as a mother. In line with patriarchal thinking he regarded this as part of his duty as a husband, but Rita wanted her own income.

I did not want to stay at home and mind the house and the children forever. Even though I am married I see myself as an individual person earning my own living so I was determined to get a job. In Singapore I had always worked so it was difficult to accept being a 'kept' woman.

Eight years had passed since Rita's first arrival in Britain. Rita enjoyed teaching adults but it was not the same as teaching children. Although she was concerned about the behaviour of some children her passion for primary teaching had not dampened. She began to make inquires about re-establishing her status as a primary practitioner. Rita was told about the PGCE course. By now O-level maths was a necessity so her endeavours were delayed for another year.

Rita's reasons for re-entering primary teaching remained the same as when she first trained. She wanted to gain economic independence and to help children become aware of and accept the multi-ethnic nature of society.

I thought of primary teaching because I felt there was something that I could impart to the children ... it is not just teaching them the general subjects of the curriculum, there is a whole field that relates to fitting into society, the wider

world. Opening their eyes to wider issues like culture. It's not just about science. In this country for example, I want to teach children about other countries, other people and for them to see things in a wider perspective. Not those narrow views, like dark people are smelly and lazy for example. In Singapore the whites or the native English are the ones who are in power, but I was not aware of racial discrimination until I came to this country. Singapore is such a multicultural society. We used to wear each other's national costumes and no one would bat an eyelid. You would not look strange. But here if you do not go out wearing a dress people look at you funnily.... I never saw myself as inferior in Singapore but there have been times in England when I have felt, perhaps it was the way that the questions were phrased, or the way they looked at me. I remember once I went to the job centre and said that I wanted to do something, and this lady looked at me and told me I could be a typist. She obviously thought, here's an Asian person let's start her right at the bottom. These are some of the ideas that I want to change. (Rita)

Like so many black students Rita felt a mission to educate children about the multicultural nature of the world, to raise their awareness of the contributions of black people and to erase some of the negative views they might hold about black people (the roles black teachers adopt in school are explored in chapter five).

Jasmine, like Rita had been encouraged to get a good education and achieve academically. Towards the end of her M.A. studies Jasmine decided that she wanted to teach undergraduate students. Her plans

however, were thwarted by her subsequent marriage. There was a tradition of teaching in Jasmine's family,

> my mother trained as a teacher but she never taught because of having children. Both of my grandmothers were headmistresses. (Jasmine)

but it was at her father-in-law's suggestion that she trained as a primary teacher. He regarded teaching as a 'good career' for a woman but only after she had performed her main function - having children. It is noticeable that this particular view fits in with the notion that teaching is 'complementary to women's 'usual' and 'natural' role of wife and mother' (Clarricoates, 1988:70).

As the wife of a doctor there was no financial imperative for Jasmine to work outside the home. On arrival in Britain Jasmine's status remained unchanged. It was only after her youngest child had started school that she began to consider how she might occupy her time whilst her children were at school.

> I didn't know what I was going to do with myself during the days. My youngest son who used to take up most of my time had started school. I needed something to occupy my time. The only thing that I was qualified to do was teaching.

Although Jasmine believed in the patriarchal ideology that a woman's place is in the home looking after her husband and children, she was angry with herself for 'sitting at home and wasting' her qualifications. After fifteen years as a housewife and

mother she wanted to resume her career as a teacher, but without DES recognition of her teaching status this seemed an impossibility. The PGCE provided an alternative option. As a multi-lingual speaker Jasmine wanted to use her knowledge of languages to help children acquire language skills. The primary classroom 'seemed the place to start'. Despite Jasmine's concerns about 'neglecting' her motherly duties she was determined to create a role for herself outside the home.

> I was worried that my children, especially the youngest, would think that I did not care about them anymore because I was not at home when they returned from school, and their dinner was not ready. My husband said I could study but there was no need for me to get a job after because we did not need the money. He said the family should come first. They do, but I have always been there for all of them and I just felt it was time for me to do something for myself. The children did not need me as much as they used to and I did not want to stay at home all day just waiting for them to come home from school. I wanted to make use of my abilities while I still could.
>
> (Jasmine)

For Rita and Jasmine their decision to enter primary teaching in Britain was influenced by their experiences of migration and the difficulties associated with trying to gain recognized teacher status. The fact that they were mothers also featured in the decisions that they made. It is important to note that none of the women I interviewed fit into the category of 'teacher as mother'. For most, the roles of teacher and mother are clearly differentiated. Rita, for

example, saw her teaching role as distinct and separate from her parenting role.

> I'm a mother, but no I'm not a very motherly person ... I know that you go through all those female things - pregnancy, mothering and all that. But I don't see it as the only thing or that's what I'm made for ... I'm an individual first before I am a mother, a wife, a daughter. I am a teacher in my own right and that is how I see myself. (Rita)

d) *racism*

The introductory chapter cited racism in education and teaching as being largely responsible for the continued under-representation of black teachers in Britain. It was suggested that racism in schools and the restricted career opportunities of black teachers led black pupils to choose alternative careers (Singh, 1988; Swann, 1985). It was also pointed out that racism is a prevalent feature of black students' ITE experience. Given that racism pervades many aspects of British life (Sarup, 1991), and prospective black student teachers are more than likely to have experienced racism in their early education in Britain, and there is a possibility that they will encounter racism in teaching, it is reasonable to assume that black students would choose not to have a career in teaching for this very reason.

In this section I aim to establish a link between the experience of racism in school and the desire to teach. I intend to show through my findings that racism does not necessarily discourage black women from entering teaching. For some of the women it was

precisely the experience of racism during their secondary schooling which led them to enter primary teaching. This will be illustrated through the secondary educational experiences of three students, Sita, Bernice and Ella.

During her fourth year at secondary school Sita worked for two weeks in a primary school as part of her school work experience. She enjoyed working with the children and began to think seriously about becoming a teacher. Whilst studying for her A-levels she did voluntary work at the school her brother attended.

> I loved it. Most of the children were Downs Syndrome and I found it very rewarding to work with them. I also did a few months in a special needs unit attached to another local school. The children worked so hard and they were so friendly. (Sita)

As her first teaching experiences were in special needs Sita toyed between special needs teaching and mainstream education.

> I decided to do mainstream teaching first and to leave my options open. In order to get access to something broad-based I decided to do a primary B.Ed degree.

Sita had two additional reasons for choosing primary teaching. First, as a secondary pupil she had spent a lot of time making life as 'difficult as possible' for trainee secondary teachers. She indicated that some of the female student teachers who had been assigned to teach her class did not seem able to control the pupils. Perhaps she

thought that as a woman she too would find it difficult to maintain classroom control. Secondly, she feared the racist attitudes of secondary pupils towards black teachers (Singh, 1988). Sita did not realise that acts of racism are also perpetrated by primary aged children (Wright, 1992; Norcross, 1990; Menter, 1989b). When she was fourteen some of the white boys at her school had called her 'Paki' and spat at her. This abusive behaviour was rather unexpected as the school population and local community were very multiracial. This incident forced Sita to become introspective and her attitude to schooling began to change.

> I didn't retaliate, I just started to think about myself and where I was going, where they are and if I wanted to be like that or better. I realised that if I wanted to be better than them I had to rise above their way of thinking. They thought that ethnic minority people were second class citizens. I knew that I wasn't, but the only way I could prove that was to try to be good at education, to do well in my studies and achieve academically. You see white people do not see us at that level. They see us as factory workers and cleaners. Until that incident occurred I wasn't really interested in education. I just saw it as being useful. But after that I changed my thinking and devoted my time to my studies. I had something to prove to those boys and to people who think like them.

Being 'good at education' was one way of gaining respect for herself and other black people. Sita's political awakening enabled her to connect racist incidents in school with a wider ideology of racism.

I suddenly began to think about the teachers who didn't encourage me, who didn't care if I did my homework or not. They just said that: "Black people don't do very well anyway". So I was allowed to take things easy. They told me it was better if I just stayed at school until I could get a job at one of the local factories where a lot of Asian people were already employed. But they never said this to the white pupils. For the first time I realised that if this was the attitude of teachers then many children like myself would end up doing factory work. I didn't want that for myself or others and the only way to ensure that was to become a teacher.

Sita's perceptions and political development were affected by racism. Although racism can have a devastating effect on the individual or group who experience it, in this case, Sita's determination to become a teacher was fuelled by her need and desire to fight racism. Her experience enabled her to realise her own ambitions.

> Everyone's got potential but I never really believed that until those boys called me 'Paki'. It's something I shall never forget. I knew that you needed to do a degree to become a teacher so I just set my sights on passing my 'O' and A-levels. If I passed these then there was no reason why I couldn't become a teacher. After that nothing seemed impossible. (Sita)

Sita's belief in her self and the emotional support of her sister was vital to her survival in a hostile environment and in helping her to achieve her aims.

When Bernice's husband's firm transferred him to a new location she was forced to give up her job as a costumier. Out of work she turned to teaching English as a second language voluntarily to adults. Her ability to do this work was assessed regularly through examinations. After one particular assessment Bernice was asked if she had thought about teaching as a career. Teaching needed 'positive' people like herself. Bernice confessed that teaching was not something she had wanted to do when she was younger, but she did enjoy working with adults. With a teaching qualification she would be able to help adults and children in their language acquisition.

Although Bernice saw her future as a teacher of adults she chose to do a primary B.Ed degree. This was due to her secondary school experiences. Secondary school had been an 'adventure' for her. She had been part of a 'gang' (boys and girls) that 'messed about in class' and 'played up' the teachers that were known to be incapable of controlling the pupils.

> We were trouble makers. Student teachers didn't stand a chance with us. They rarely gave our class student teachers. They didn't last. If you could get them to cry you had done your job. We were awful children. There were some male teachers who were just as bad as the students. They would get so annoyed that they would leave the classroom and another teacher would have to take over. There was one particular female teacher who was so boring that we used to think of ways to disrupt her lesson. For example, like the crayon throwing contest which took ages to sort out, because once

one person had thrown the crayon they would have to go and pick it up. That person would then shout: "No!" and the teacher wouldn't teach the class until whoever had thrown the crayon had picked it up. You just knew it was going to go on like that for ages. The teacher would never ignore the crayon that had been thrown because she was adamant that it had to be picked up, and whoever had thrown it was also adamant that they would not. This was a good way of disrupting the class because it wasn't just the one person, the whole class would then join in. (Bernice)

Bernice's parents had stressed the importance of education and good behaviour to her, but for Bernice and her friends it did not matter whether the teachers they were given were students or experienced teachers. The aim was to disrupt the lesson. Inevitably this type of behaviour brought Bernice and her friends into direct conflict with staff.

According to Swann, racism can have a 'direct and acute bearing ... on what goes on in the classroom' (1985:30). Bernice cited her experiences of teacher racism as another reason for her disruptive behaviour at secondary school. Most of the teachers were regarded as racist but the attitude of one teacher in particular pushed Bernice away from schooling. He was an expatriate who had taught in the Caribbean for a number of years. He did not appear to be an 'overt racist' (Mirza, 1992), but the implication behind some of his statements were unmistakable to the black pupils. For example, he would say: "I've taught your sort of people before. I don't know what your problem is". He also resorted to humiliation as a tactic.

> He would always hit us (the black children) over the back of the head with his ruler whilst telling us that we were stupid.

Bernice thought the only way to handle this type of racism was to be confrontational. It was a way of maintaining some self respect (Fuller, 1980).

> I would argue back and it would be like a slanging match between us both and the louder he got the louder I got. I rarely backed down ... When I was sent out of the classroom I would stand outside and mess about just as much, or I would wander off. If the teacher insulted me in front of the class I felt I had to do the same to him. I used to get angry especially if I was told off for talking to someone who was white when it was obvious that it was that person who had spoken to me first. As far as he was concerned white children never did anything wrong.

Although the behaviour of Bernice and her friends presented a challenge to authority, as a group they felt discriminated against because they were black (Gillborn, 1990). They realised that though they were often able to assert themselves, they could not beat the system.

By the fourth year, a teacher whose attitude they respected suggested that they take a 'serious look' at what they were doing and think about their futures. They took heed of his advice and knuckled down to studying their O-level courses.

> We wanted to do well because we knew that the teachers did not expect us to. All of us in the gang worked very hard in the evenings at each other's houses. We talked about what we wanted to do and how we were going to do it. The teachers did not take us seriously but we knew what we were aiming for. There were times when we couldn't master something during the lesson so we would take it home and put our heads together until we had solved the problem. In a sense we all helped each other. We were our own little self help group.

The 'gang' regarded the study group they had established as a 'means of challenging their teachers' expectations of them' (Mirza, 1995:168). But as the exams approached they were told that they had been entered for the lower level examination of CSE (Certificate of Secondary Schooling). This was unacceptable to them and an appointment was made to speak to the headteacher in an attempt to get the decision reversed. The teachers felt that this was their 'just reward' for messing about in class - something they had not done for two years. The group were determined to prove that they were capable of passing the higher level exams. Bernice suggested that they were allowed to take their O-levels because the headteacher was keen to 'prove them wrong'.

> He said the staff thought we weren't intelligent enough and the only way for us to accept our self worth was if we failed our O-levels. But we had no intention of failing.

The group surpassed their own expectations and went on to do A-levels. The acquisition of academic qualifications was an integral

part of having 'control' over their lives (Fuller, 1980). Bernice's account reveals that in some schools the actions of teachers can contribute to the underachievement or failure of black children (Wright, 1987). It also serves to illustrate how examination streaming was used as a mechanism to limit pupil opportunity; and had the effect of reinforcing stereotypes of underachievement amongst particular groups of people.

The question of how different black students perceive and respond to teaching has to be addressed in greater detail. Student biographies are essential to this process. According to Knowles, student teachers' 'thinking about teaching ... is partially shaped by their prior experiences' (1992:99). Bernice's choice of primary teaching was directly influenced by her secondary school experiences. Having reflected on her own behaviour as an adolescent Bernice realised how difficult teaching secondary aged pupils could be. She did not want to experience the type of 'pressure and ridicule' she and her friends had inflicted upon their secondary school teachers. In view of her own behaviour towards student teachers Bernice did not relish the idea of doing teaching practice in secondary schools. She also chose primary teaching because she felt that as a primary practitioner she would be able to impress upon black children in their early stages of development, the importance of being educated in order to be able to challenge the system from within. She saw 'having qualifications' as one way of ensuring that black children are equipped to challenge societal inequalities. However, she suggested that many children would not realise the benefits of their education, or their ability if they behaved in school the way she did as a teenager. Although O-level and CSE are no longer used as

methods of assessing pupils, Bernice does not want any child to have to face the kind of discrimination that she had in her fifth year of schooling.

> Now it's not a case of CSE or O-level, it's GCSE's (General Certificate of Secondary Education). But children can deny themselves the opportunity of achieving further by believing that they are only capable of attaining their GCSE's at the lowest grades. Low grades won't enable them to do their A-levels or even to find a decent job in times of high unemployment. So I would like to be there in the primary classroom to point out the pitfalls of being at school, like messing around and not working hard. If children realise at an early age that they could be wasting their potential by playing up, then this will help them to achieve at a later stage. (Bernice)

The continuous racial abuse by staff at her secondary school aroused feelings of anger and resentment in Ella. When she began secondary school she was informed that:

> They had never seen children like us before. I thought we were just children but they looked at us differently. I went to a school which was originally very white middle-class but it had recently amalgamated with a multi-ethnic school. This made the school population more mixed and the middle-class teachers did not like that. They kept pointing out to us that we were black and that black people were different to white people. I think the more teachers kept pointing out to

you that you were black and that you were different, you began to think that you were different and that you did not belong. Some of them told us they did not want us there. They made us feel unwelcome. One morning I went to school with my hair in plaits and the head just took me in her office and told me to undo them because she did not like it. She said my plaits made me look like a gollywog from the jungle and that her school wasn't a jungle. (Ella)

The reaction of Ella's teachers to the change in student intake echo sentiments expressed by other teachers in similar situations (see for example, Gillborn, 1992). Ella's experience is an example of how schools transmit and reinforce messages concerning 'the degree to which students truly belong' (Gillborn, 1992:59; see also Figueroa, 1991).

Ella found herself in a no-win situation. When she gained top marks in a test she was told that 'all blacks are show offs', but after failing to reach the required standard in another test she learnt that she was an 'idiot'. Teachers continually denied that they were racist even though black pupils were routinely placed in lower streams, regardless of ability. According to Ella, the top strand appeared to be 'reserved' for white pupils.

One teacher told me that blacks were not as clever as white people. But I got the highest marks in the test. My marks were much higher than those in the top stream. But they did not think that was grounds for moving up.

Ella lacked the confidence to openly challenge her school experiences, so she truanted. But at the same time she was silently determined to pass her 'O' and A-levels.

> I think I passed my exams because I was so angry. I told myself that I was going to pass every exam that I could to show them what I could do. (Ella)

The negative school experiences of Ella, Bernice and Sita were shared by other black women in this research. Zaria, referred to one aspect of teacher racism which had remained with her throughout her life.

> Ninety per cent of the children in my school were Asian and I remember one of the teacher's telling a visitor that it was 'a chocolate factory'. That was terrible, I really felt bad. I mean just because we were all brown it didn't mean we were chocolates. (Zaria)

Unfortunately experiences of racism are not uncommon in schools (see for example, Jayaweera, 1993; Matthews, 1992; Mirza, 1992; Gillborn, 1990; Hammersley, 1990; Mac an Ghaill, 1988; Wright, 1987; Bryan et al., 1985). In the accounts of the women who had experienced racism in education it was possible to see the lasting imprint that it had made on their lives, and how it had contributed to many of the decisions they made.

All of the women interviewed believe that adult life can be influenced by the teaching children receive in primary school. For

these women the earlier a child's personality is shaped (Burgess and Carter, 1992) the more likely they will go through life with a positive sense of self and a belief in their ability. If children are to emerge as 'confident, competent individuals ready to face the world', they argue that the groundwork must be laid at primary school (this point will be developed further in chapter five). In addition, it was felt that if children are to be enabled to resist racism this has to be done as early as possible. Secondary school is too late for this work to commence because children will (as these women did) already have internalized certain messages about their self worth. For example,

> I remember when I was at school and the time came for us to start thinking about careers the careers teacher told me that my ideas of becoming a lawyer were unrealistic for a black child. He asked me why I hadn't thought of typing or nursing. (Chloe)

Although Chloe did not accept the careers teacher's assessment of her future role, she suggested that she would have achieved her ambition of becoming a lawyer if she had had experience of a black teacher, as this would have provided her with an example of a black person 'doing well', and given her the confidence to succeed. Chloe passed her 'O' and A-levels but it took her a while to believe in her ability and decide upon an alternative career. She chose primary teaching to ensure that black children did not make the same mistake and 'lose sight of their ambitions'. If she is there when they begin their schooling she can encourage them 'to aim high and achieve' their goals in adult life.

From the above accounts it is possible to assert, contrary to Singh (1988) and Swann (1985) that one of the main motivating factors for some black women entering primary teaching is the experience of individual and institutional racism. Furthermore, racist school experiences led many to see themselves as agents of change. As Ella, echoing Chloe above, explains,

> ... If I am there with the children from the age of six or seven hopefully I can give them enough confidence, so that no matter what anyone says when they are thirteen or fourteen they will have a positive sense of their self worth. They will know that they are just as good and as capable as the next person. More importantly I want to give them the strength to carry on regardless of what other people tell them. Whereas I don't think I had that when I was younger. I just felt that I didn't belong, that I wasn't wanted at school. I couldn't understand why the teachers said the nasty things they did and when I told my parents they told me not to be silly because, 'teachers don't do things like that'. My parents didn't understand what was going on at school so they weren't able to help me. The remarks the teachers made hurt so much. If someone had been there for me, to give me that extra confidence in myself I might have been able to fight back. I want to be one of those people that helps children to fight back. (Ella)

It is important to stress that despite the extent of their own experiences of racism, black women who enter ITE do so with the intention of enabling the development of all children, not just black

children. However, as racism has been shown to exist widely in British society, (Paul Gilroy, 1992:51, describes it as 'a volatile presence at the very centre of British politics') the insights of these teachers into some of the negative experiences encountered by black people can have a significant impact on black pupils in school.

The experience of racism was not the main motivating factor in all cases. A few of the African-Caribbean women interviewed were inspired to become teachers through their own love of school and positive school experiences.

> From the moment I went to school I loved it. I have never thought of anything else but teaching. (Yula)

Several were confident that they would enjoy teaching and that they could do a good job.

> I worked in a science lab in a secondary school and I used to see all these teachers trying to present a particular concept. I thought my goodness - How can they come into school and be paid that type of money and do that? I'm sure I could do a better job than they did. I like young children and because I enjoy science I thought I could combine both in primary teaching. (Olive)

Parental influences

The parents of some of the black women interviewed played an influential role in the decisions they made. The following will reveal some of the different ways in which South Asian and African-Caribbean parents influenced their daughters' lives.

a) *cultural/patriarchal expectations*

hooks has suggested that in 'naming one's experience' it is essential to 'talk about identity in relation to culture, history and politics' (1989:110). In order to put the motivations and pre ITE gendered experiences of the South Asian women in this research into context it is important to look at cultural and patriarchal expectations for these women.

The entry of the South Asian women in this study into higher education was constrained by two main factors; their unmarried status and parental fears of outside (Western) influences. Rehill (1991) suggests that what South Asian parents fear most is the loss of 'Izzat' (respect in the community for the family) 'when daughters form broader and inter-racial friendships' which may hinder their chances of marriage (ibid:9). 'Izzat' is regarded as being essential to maintaining honour, status and respect (Osler, 1989). In terms of appearance and behaviour girls/women are expected to preserve family (male) pride (Kalra, 1980; Wilson, 1978). In view of these expectations 'Izzat' may have a considerable impact on whether unmarried South Asian women are allowed to enter higher education at all.

It has been argued that patriarchal concepts such as 'Izzat' and 'honour' exist to control women's sexual behaviour and are used as justifications for restricting their movements outside the home. However, patriarchal discourses about sexually appropriate behaviour are not confined to South Asian parents (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). Dyhouse points out that in nineteenth century England, the main aim of middle-class parents was to ensure their daughters 'grew up eligible for 'good' marriages' (1984:54; see also Purvis, 1995). Such aims ruled out schools and colleges which preached 'unconventionality' and which failed to police male/female relationships. In other words the aim of education then for girls was to equip them for marriage and motherhood. These sentiments were still being expressed in the twentieth century:

> ... our girls should be educated in terms of their main social function which is to make for themselves, their children and their husbands a secure and comfortable home and to be mothers (Newsom Report, 1963).

Whilst it cannot be denied that attitudes such as these are oppressive to girls and women, it is also important to view 'Izzat' in the broader context of migration and the settlement of South Asian families in Britain. South Asian families saw themselves as being in the midst of an 'alien' and potentially subversive society when they came to Britain. So the only way to maintain an unhindered existence was to cling to and reinforce traditional cultural norms and values. After decades of settlement most still hold this view. In common with many immigrant parents they fear the erosion of their identity by Western influences. As second and third generation children begin

to question traditional parental attitudes or adopt values and practices more in line with Western ones (see for example, Knott and Khokher, 1993) retaining a semblance of identity and 'respect in the community' becomes evermore pressing. For many parents denying their daughters access to higher education may for some seem to be the only plausible route to maintaining 'Izzat' and their cultural identity. It is important to note that second generation children do not displace one culture for another. Instead they evolve new cultures which combine aspects of both. Gita, one of the women in this study explains this further.

> My parents come from India and they have very strong cultural attitudes. Living in England has given me a Western side as well. So I try to express what I want to rather than the things my parents want me to express. They are very modest and shy and think that Asians should not attract attention to themselves. I am not modest or shy and I can be a bit of a loud mouth. The one thing that my mother hates is the fact that I love clothes. I know she would be happier if I wore plain garments that have no effect at all and if I wore my hair flat down. But how I look is important to me. This does not mean that I have rejected my parents values as they are part of me, our way of life. (Gita)

b) *marital status*

In this research I found that the 'control' of South Asian women's lives and their participation in spheres outside the home was not confined to unmarried women. The entry into higher education for

one married woman indicated that 'marital status' is a significant factor. Her experiences seem to suggest that married and unmarried women experience different types of 'control' from their families. However, it has the same effects - the regulation of female behaviour outside the home. In this section I highlight the influence of 'Izzat' (as described above) and how it is negotiated by married and unmarried women in their endeavour to gain access to higher education, and maintain 'respect' in their families and communities. These experiences are followed by an examination of the role African-Caribbean mothers played in their unmarried daughters' entry into higher education.

Despite the fears of encroaching Western influences many South Asian girls are permitted to study beyond compulsory schooling. Many parents support their daughters' wishes to continue studying because they realise the benefits that higher education can bring (Brah, 1992). However, in the attempt to stem Western influences and any possible impropriety, some parents impose restrictions on their daughters' activities and their appearance. For example,

> ... mom always says: "Do your hair like this, don't put too much make-up on". My parents don't mind me putting eye liner on but I am not allowed to wear lipstick, leave my hair open, wear clothes which might cause men to stare, go into town with my friends or come home late in the evenings. (Zaria)

Many are also careful about the choice of college for their daughters', preferring their daughters' to attend local colleges (Singh, 1990). Zaria (a Muslim) had wanted to teach since her first

experience of working with young children at the age of fourteen. She readily accepted her parents wishes to study locally even though she acknowledged the significance of gender in their decision.

> I could look after myself and live on my own but it is not allowed ... if it had been a boy instead of me he would have been allowed to go to London or anywhere he wanted to. But as I am a girl my parents will not allow me to live on my own until I am married. My parents told me that as they were giving me the opportunity to study I had to choose between Rosehall and Springfield. (Zaria)

The distance of both Rosehall and Springfield was attractive to her parents as both were easily accessible. Although Zaria's parents restricted her choice of college they actually gave her greater freedom through the use of a car. Zaria explains her parents more liberal attitude by the fact that she was 'strong in her culture' and 'adhered to the daily ritual of prayer'.

Parental perception of appropriate distance could at times frustrate career goals. Gita wanted to be a psychologist and had secured a place at an institution in London. Initially her parents agreed to this choice and understood that it meant moving away from home, but at the last minute when Gita began searching for accommodation they changed their minds. Gita's parents did not think it was appropriate for Gita as an unmarried South Asian woman to study away from home or live on her own. They were concerned about how this would be viewed by other family members and the South Asian community

in which they lived. Gita explains the reasoning behind her parents objections in more detail below.

> As long as it is within the tradition, the way that the culture works, they do not mind you having a career. But if it breaks away then that's it. After my A-levels my parents told me that they did not mind me studying and having a career, but if that means going away to study they will stop you. You see moving away is seen as breaking away from the culture and breaking away from the culture is regarded as moving away from your parents. Besides being a person in your own right you are a part of your parents and before you get married they worry in case you get tainted in any way. It is because you are a strong part of their reputation that they have to control you. By controlling you they protect themselves from gossip and from having to answer embarrassing questions, like: "Is your daughter married? What is she up to? Why doesn't she live at home?" (Gita)

Gita's comments help to demonstrate the importance of culture in the structuring of some South Asian women's educational and 'social experience' (Gillborn, 1995:83; see also Brah, 1992). With her dream shattered, Gita turned to her headteacher for advice. After discovering that the local institutions which offered psychology were full, he suggested primary teaching.

> ... he just got me thinking about the idea and I thought it would be better than any option that I had. I think he had thought about Rosehall before he started talking to me about

it. The next day I went in again, he had leaflets and went through what it was like for him when he did his training. He rang college and got me an interview. This was just a week before they were due to open.

It could be argued that Gita's headteacher was being genuinely helpful by finding a course that would enable Gita to live at home and continue studying. As a teacher himself it is probable that he saw teaching as a worthy profession to enter. However, by suggesting primary teaching the headteacher appears to be operating with a feminized view of primary teaching.

The thought of teaching did not cause Gita too much anxiety. As a sixth former she had done support teaching with third year pupils at her secondary school. Gita's interview at Rosehall convinced her that a primary teaching degree was a good compromise as it would allow her to explore aspects of psychology within it. This was something that she could build on at a later stage. Although teaching was not Gita's preferred option, it seemed to offer a better alternative to 'sitting at home' and 'having a life outside higher education'.

The difficulties Gita encountered in trying to gain access to higher education illustrates how gender operates at one level to restrict women's choices generally, and how 'culture' which plays a major role in socializing and governing human behaviour, has the ability to further reduce women's choices. The cultural codes South Asian women are expected to follow help to highlight one of the dilemmas faced by black people living in racist societies. Many black women, for example, find themselves in the contradictory position of having

to defend their culture and ensure that they do nothing to undermine it, whilst at the same time allowing their choices and ultimately their behaviour, to be dictated by the very aspects of their culture which they may find most oppressing to them as women - 'the thing that really annoys me is that when my brother grows up he will be allowed to do anything he chooses to because he is male' (Gita).

Gita's parents found it necessary to restrict her choice of college. This draws attention not only to South Asian parental concerns about Western influences, but also their anxieties about the negative influences of other South Asians. Gita's father was afraid that Gita's attitude might change in the manner he had witnessed amongst some second generation South Asian children. As Gita explains,

> When I was doing my A-levels I wanted to take a GCSE course in law at the local FE (further education) college which was attended by a lot of Asians, but my father would not agree. He told me he was afraid of me seeing how some Asian children lead their lives. He did not want me to be influenced by them. When I was going to school he did not mind if other ethnic minorities were there, but he deliberately took me away from schools that had large intakes of Asian pupils. So I always went to predominantly white schools.

Tomlinson's (1983) research of black women in higher education revealed that both working-class and middle-class parents regard living and attending schools in 'white' areas as being better for those who want to achieve. From this it is possible to assert, contrary

to stereotype, that South Asian parents encourage and facilitate the educational development of their daughters.

> My parents have always pushed us in education ... they've always said that we should have a career for ourselves. (Ranjit)

But, as Tomlinson (1983) showed, some do operate with racialized notions of academic achievement in which 'white' is seen as 'best'. Through Gita's story it is possible to see how gender, 'race', class and ethnicity can function simultaneously in the experience of South Asian women. It also points to the particular influence that fathers can have in the education and social 'control' of their daughters.

The experiences of the unmarried South Asian women I have so far highlighted would seem to indicate that young South Asian women in general are powerless victims of patriarchal discourses and historical traditions. However, it was equally clear that these women were creative agents in their own destinies and were not afraid to challenge traditional values.

> I got married in Germany when I was eighteen. I didn't want to. It was an Indian wedding and after three days I just ran away and came back to England before completing the English part of the marriage ceremony. I told my husband that I was going to collect some of my things from home but I never went back. I told my mom that I wasn't ready for marriage but she wouldn't listen. Before mom divorced, dad was always beating her up and I didn't want an Indian husband doing

that to me. Mom said I should stay with my husband because it was the tradition. Even though her marriage had failed she wanted all of her daughters to be governed by traditional customs. But I couldn't accept that so I rebelled and rejected the traditional values. (Yasmin)

The above claim can be further substantiated by looking at the experiences of Sita who successfully negotiated a path between conformity and independence. Sita lived in an area where three ITE instititutions were within easy reach but she wanted to study away from home. The course at Rosehall appealed to her. Sita dismissed her father's objections by emphasising that teaching was something that she wanted to do and she intended to fulfil her ambition. In her effort to resist the constraints that her father was attempting to place on her, Sita made it clear to her parents that she was going to study wherever she chose to, especially as she had, 'not strayed in any way, ... had not caused them any disrespect and had not abused their trust' in her. She also pointed out that a degree would secure a 'better educated partner' and the possibility of 'greater prestige for the family' when she eventually got married. Fortunately, she had relatives living near Rosehall, and this eased her parents concerns that she would spend her time 'going to the pub, staying out late and having wild parties'. Sita's parents assumed that she might easily be led into changing her lifestyle but that as a 'good' girl, she would allow her behaviour to be dictated by her relatives. For Sita, however, living away from home was the means towards developing an independent life.

Raissiguier (1993) has shown how Algerian girls work within the confines of traditional boundaries and expectations to achieve what they want academically. Gita, provides a different example of how unmarried South Asian women can acquire a certain level of independence without becoming alienated from their families or 'the community'. She agreed to marry in her third year in exchange for the opportunity to do a degree.

> It's like a bargaining situation. My parents have given me extra time so that I can study. But in the end you know they want something in return. (Gita)

However, she was adamant that she wanted to have a career. Consequently, she did not intend to get married until such a time as she had attained the necessary qualifications and found a partner who was willing to accept her wishes.

> I don't want to get married. I have always said that I am not getting married. My intention is have a career first and it is just a case of trying to convince my parents of this. I don't intend to give in. I have been working towards becoming a psychologist since I did my GCSE's. I really can't see myself being satisfied with just being a housewife. If I didn't do a degree I wouldn't be able to do the things that I want to. When I finish my B.Ed I am going to do a masters in psychology.

Gita acknowledged that her outright rejection of marriage would have placed her parents and herself in a difficult position. Both her mother and sister were married by the age of twenty so her parents

and other family members thought that this was also an appropriate age for Gita to marry. A rejection of this particular family tradition might have destroyed any ambitions she had of having a career, and created disharmony within the wider family network. Thus she agreed to comply with her parents wishes as far as she was able. Gita thought that once she had begun her teaching degree she would have been in a 'better position' to coax her parents into seeing things from her point of view. On the surface Gita appears to have set out to intentionally deceive her parents. For Gita, however, it was the only way that she could attempt to overcome cultural and family expectations and accommodate her own aims. It is interesting to note that despite increased exhortations from her parents, at the beginning of her fourth year, Gita was still unmarried and her intentions remained the same.

The examples of Sita and Gita support the view that traditional values are not static (Brah, 1993) and that they can be adapted according to need. All of the women in this study enjoyed the pursuit of knowledge and saw roles for themselves outside the home. For many their determination to succeed and occupy positions outside the home overrode any parental objections to their studying and having a career.

> I have always wanted to have a career for myself because I don't want to rely on anyone to support me. You get a lot of independence if you have a career. (Yasmin)

The aforementioned examples provide an insight into the aspects which affected the entry of some of the unmarried South Asian

women in this research into teaching. Zita, is an example of how some married South Asian women defy family objections in order to gain economic independence and have a career outside the home. It will be seen from Zita's story that parental influences in women's lives do not necessarily end because they get married. This is also an example of the combination of cultural and patriarchal gender role expectations imposing restrictions and sanctions on a woman's life. Zita, however, demonstrates courage and determination in her efforts to overthrow these obstacles.

The process towards entering ITE and securing financial independence was a lengthy one for Zita. Zita married when she was sixteen, immediately after her O-levels, and entered nursing at the age of seventeen. Her nursing career ended prematurely because of patriarchal gender role expectations and family constraints.

> I gave up after a year. I just couldn't carry on because there was too much pressure on me from my husband. He expected me to be there when he got home from work and for his meals to be ready. But when you're nursing you have to do shift work. It just caused so many problems and my parents were putting pressure on me because I was married. They felt that the wife's place was in the home looking after her husband. I left nursing and worked in a factory for a short while. I stopped working in the factory when I had the children. (Zita)

Zita actually enjoyed being a housewife and mother but she also wanted to work outside the home. She found a job as a part-time youth worker. This type of work also created difficulties for Zita.

> I took up youth work. It was just three hours a week working with an Asian girls' group but nobody in the family approved. I started to get involved in things that were going on in the community and my husband didn't like that. My mother said I was mixing with Western women. She thought the girls I was working with would influence the way I behaved at home because she thought they must have been 'bad' to have left home. Youth work didn't fit into life as they (the family) saw it. My parents wanted me to be at home. The only work they approved of was working in a factory, if my husband didn't mind. He preferred me to work in a factory because in the factory I would be in contact with lots of older Asian women who he felt would educate me as to how I should behave. That is to be an obedient wife and mother.

Zita's family were concerned that her experiences of working with Western women and South Asian girls who were outside of the control of their families would alter her behaviour. However, it was precisely their attitude towards her which contributed most to changes in her subsequent behaviour.

Zita's involvement in community work brought her to a new understanding of how she saw her self. She realised that she wanted to do something more academically fulfilling than being a wife and mother, but she lacked confidence in her academic ability. She

regretted not having pursued any studies after her marriage. A friend who regarded teaching and youth work as having the same purpose - helping others - encouraged Zita to apply to join Rosehall's Access into primary teaching course. Before their marriage Zita's husband, a graduate, had said that he would support her wish to continue studying. But when Zita applied for the Access course her husband withdrew his promise. This deeply affected her self esteem.

> I really had a bad self image of myself because of what my husband had said. He used to say that I wasn't educated enough for him. He had qualifications and I didn't. Yet when I had the opportunity to change that he didn't agree. He just thought it was a big joke that I was going to apply to college. He didn't think that I would get onto anything because he said I was stupid. As far as he was concerned stupid people wouldn't be allowed to begin a course because they were bound to fail. I was amazed that I got onto anything because I was a real mess.

Walby (1990) argues that such behaviour is reminiscent of patriarchs who want to confine women to the sphere of the home.

Unequal power relations within the family are more overtly/explicitly realised when women seek to participate in activities outside the home which are not related to their domestic roles, but entail a change to the domestic routine for the male.

> My husband had a lot of pressure from the family, especially when my parents came over and he was cooking or washing the dishes because I hadn't returned from college. My mother

would have a go at him because she felt he was doing women's work. I think it got too much for him so he took it out on me.

Some women like Zita, experience not only resistance from male partners, but also their mothers who idealize women's domestic role and see no reason why this should change. Zita's mother represented the epitome of motherhood whereby the 'good' wife and mother devotes herself to the needs of the family.

My mother said I should feel proud to stay at home and look after the children and my husband. She had been happy being a housewife - so why couldn't I? She didn't think that studying was necessary for being a wife and mother.

She failed to understand why being a wife and mother were not sufficient for Zita. The family pressures Zita experienced are not confined to women of South Asian origin. Burkitt has suggested that women experience 'additional social pressures inside and outside the family, particularly if some elders hold the view that women should take primary care of the children' (1995:159). In seeking educational advancement Zita as a woman, stepped outside her prescribed roles of wife and mother in her parents and husband's eyes. She had become 'too big' for her 'boots' as they saw it. This view was reinforced when Zita refused to give up studying in favour of saving her marriage.

My husband gave me an ultimatum, study or divorce. There was a lot of family pressure for me to give up the Access course. My parents felt that my marriage was more important.

The choice between marriage and studying was not a viable proposition. Although Zita did not perceive studying as rejecting traditional feminine roles, she had begun to think beyond the confines of her marriage. Women who choose education as a pathway often find that their partners are resentful of the time they spend studying and fear their educational advancement (Spender, 1982).

> ... my marriage deteriorated because my husband didn't like me studying at night. Sometimes I would work till three in the morning. He felt the course was more important than him and that all I had time for was the children and my studies. In a way he was right ... but what he feared most was the fact that he believed that I would leave him after I graduated, because he didn't have a degree. (Ella)

For those partners who are unable to cope with the domestic and intellectual changes that studying can bring, divorce often seems the most plausible solution. Enduring a divorce and 'ostracism' from her family and the local community was the price Zita paid for choosing not to be educationally stifled, but more importantly, for not conforming to patriarchal expectations of female behaviour. Such actions serve to dispel the myth that South Asian women are 'docile' and 'passive' (Brah, 1992; Jackson and Killingley, 1991; Trivedi, 1984). However, the sanction applied by Zita's parents for her presumed 'disobedience' and 'irrational behaviour' was to totally isolate her and her children.

With British families you often get help from your parents once you are divorced and your husband will see the children on a reasonable basis. You will get help from both sets of parents. I don't get help from anybody. I didn't just divorce my husband, I divorced my mother and father and my five brothers and sisters. None of them will have anything to do with me or the children now. They said that I had brought dishonour, shame to the family, both families. It's very difficult because in the Asian community what other people think matters so much... I came from a situation where I was propped up all the time. I was always told what to do and everything was mapped out into a situation where there was nothing except me and the children. The tables turned and the children became totally dependent on me. I had to learn to do everything for myself.

The sanctions resulted in Zita's self growth and her increased determination to make 'something' of herself.

It made me recognize my weaknesses and my vulnerability. Once you've recognized that you can become stronger.

They also forced her to search for 'acceptance' in a new community.

Hinduism didn't give me any hope and I needed hope. I didn't go out looking for it, it happened around the time when I left my husband. I didn't have much faith in what my parents were saying or what they believed in because it didn't have a place for me after what I'd done. I had divorced my husband

and it doesn't allow for that. I didn't fit in and I didn't know how to. I wasn't living a Hindu life and I didn't feel like one. My family had rejected me and I needed to find acceptance elsewhere. I was invited to a Christian meeting and what I heard sounded right. Being a Christian I can live my life how I see fit. The friends I met at church accepted me without question and gave me hope, a new meaning to my life.

The Access course had already given Zita the strength and confidence to free herself from an unhappy marriage and low self esteem. For many women education becomes the source of their survival, growth and economic independence (Collins, 1990). But after her marriage break up Zita had to consider whether she was ready to take on a further four year's studying. If she progressed onto the B.Ed degree it would possibly result in financial hardship for herself and her children.

I didn't know if the course was the right thing to do. I had just got custody of the children. I didn't know if I could spend four years at college studying and still be able to support my children. I had to seriously think about what I wanted to do.

The struggle for education continued, but after two terms the emotional pressures, together with the practicalities of trying to support a family on a low income and finding a home overcame Zita. So she left the B.Ed course.

I had a lot of pressures outside of college. My parents were angry with me. They felt that if I had given up the Access

course I would still have a marriage. ... I had to sort my life out. There were a lot of practical things that I had to sort out, like finding somewhere to live. I didn't have any money so I went back into the youth service part time. The money I earned just wasn't enough to support the children. After eighteen months there didn't seem to be any alternative really but to go back to college and work towards a better paid job.

The practical and financial difficulties that Zita encountered in trying to remain in higher education continue to be experienced by many women returners to education (see Burkitt, 1995).

Although a friend had initially suggested teaching, when Zita decided to re-apply to join the primary B.Ed course at Rosehall it was because she realised the long term benefits that such a course could offer. It meant that she would be able to gain educational stimulation, be employed outside the home and cater for the needs of her children. At the end of the day teaching was to be the source of Zita's independence.

The flexibility and freedom to work that teaching offers, together with financial independence, has been cited by some of the mothers in this study and other women as reasons for choosing teaching (see also, Hill, 1994; Bullough et al. 1991; Miller, 1986). But, of all the mothers interviewed Zita was the only one who suggested that she chose teaching above other professions for its ability to accommodate her childcare needs. She explains,

I didn't make a conscious decision about teaching. It was just something that I could fit in around the children. I just thought about something that fits in with children, it's the only thing that does. That may be the wrong reason, but if you've got young children and you're on your own what are you supposed to do with them during school holidays? With teaching you have the same time off. It's the only thing that fits in. (Zita)

Zita's struggles against gender role ideologies highlights dilemmas faced by single parents. It is as heads of one parent families that women in particular find that the family and more so society curtails their freedom and choice of career. If childcare provision both pre-school and after was a political priority then mothers as primary care givers would be able to choose alternative careers if they so wished. Over the years governments (especially during the Thatcher years when a return to Victorian bourgeois values were extolled) have reduced state funding and in effect denied the need to provide quality childcare nursery places. Ideologies of the family perpetuate the patriarchal myth that all mothers are part of a two parent high income relationship. Phillips (1988) has argued that such misrepresentation and exclusionary strategies, like denying women access to state nursery provision, serves to ensure that women exist in a state of dependency on men. However, Zita has shown through her struggle to enter and remain in ITE that women do not have to be dependent on men, or suppress their desires for higher education, or the opportunity to become career women because of patriarchal gender role ideologies, or lack of childcare provision. The price they have to pay, however, can be exceptionally high.

Young African-Caribbean women share many factors in common with South Asian women. One is the desire to gain a career via higher education. Marsha had aspirations to become a teacher at an early age. Unfortunately, she failed her A-levels and would have given up her ambition had her mother not encouraged her to re-sit her exams and prove to herself that she was capable of 'doing better'. Marsha's mother had had ambitions of becoming a teacher before she married, but after her children were born she found that nursing and in particular night duty, fitted in with her husband's employment hours and enabled them to share childcare responsibilities. In fulfilling her own ambitions Marsha was unconsciously satisfying her mother's dream.

Similarly, Maureen was inspired by her mother to go to university. She loved languages and aimed to specialise in international relations. However, she decided that if she could not find a suitable course locally she would not do a degree as she wanted to be near her mother.

> If I'm honest I think I was quite happy to stay at home until I got married. Mom has always worked and she spent so much time telling me how important it was for me to have a career that I did intend to get a job. But I wasn't keen on going to university because it meant leaving home, my mom. I guess you could call me a 'mommy's girl'. (Maureen)

Earlier I highlighted the difficulties encountered by Gita who wanted to study away from home, but was prevented from doing so by her parents. During the course of my interviews with the

unmarried South Asian women it was noticeable the extent to which they talked about the importance of the 'community' in their lives - and not just the family. This must undoubtedly have put pressure on families to maintain a 'respectable front' in the 'community'. The effect of this however, was to restrict some of the women's choices. In the case of the unmarried African-Caribbean women the overriding concerns of their parents' were the societal inequalities they would have to face as black people, and the need to have an education to help them combat them. Maureen's mother, adamant that she enter university (near or far) and fulfil her potential, outlined the disadvantages of being black and uneducated in British society.

> She just told me that I should look at the type of jobs black people had. She stressed that because of the racism in society that it would be extremely difficult for me to get a job if I didn't have any qualifications (see Mirza, 1995 - I note it below).

Maureen compromised by attending a university which was not local, but which allowed her to return home at weekends. Whilst at university Maureen came to the conclusion that she wanted to be a French teacher. After her degree she worked for a year then applied to join the primary PGCE course at Rosehall College for the following reason.

> As I look back my years at junior school probably made me want to be a primary teacher. Primary school is totally different from secondary because it's like one big happy

family with all of the children doing everything together with one teacher, whereas in secondary school you have a different teacher for everything.

The nature of primary school teaching whereby one teacher is responsible for educating her pupils in all areas of the curriculum has been likened to teachers spending long periods of time 'with 'their' children as, mothers do with theirs, often in relative isolation from other adults in their kitchen-like classrooms' (Grumet, 1988:85 - cited by Acker, 1995:23) and, as being responsible for the development of 'mother-like intense attachments' to pupils (Kidder - cited by Acker, 1995:23). Although Maureen views the primary classroom as being 'one big happy family', she was not supporting the notion of the 'teacher as mother'.

> I am not anyone's mother, so why should I play mother at school? School is about learning not mothering. (Maureen)

From these interviews it can be seen that African-Caribbean mothers rejected gender role ideologies which aimed to confine women to the home. Having pursued careers themselves they expected their daughters to do the same (for other examples of the lengths African-Caribbean women will go to, to ensure their children achieve academically, see Jayaweera, 1993). In this way they differed from the mothers of the South Asian women who were interviewed. Another area of difference was that there did not appear to be any apparent sanctions imposed on African-Caribbean women for choosing to have a career. For these women being a wife

and mother and 'having a career' was part of the cultural expectation (for other examples see Mirza, 1995).

End points

The experiences discussed above point to the extent of influence of South Asian parents in the education and career choices of their daughters. Although it might seem that these parental influences are negative as they appear to be aimed at restricting women's access to higher education, this is not always the case. Many parents encouraged their daughters' efforts to gain an education. One parent went as far as changing his daughter's schools in order to enhance her chances of success.

Unmarried daughters were a source of particular concern for South Asian parents. Constraints are placed on unmarried women to ensure that they do not jeopardize their chances of marriage, or enter into a situation which could result in the loss of 'respect in the community'. Zita's experiences have shown that married women too are constrained by cultural and patriarchal expectations. Although such restrictions on female behaviour are oppressive, for these young women they were merely 'another hurdle that has to be faced by some women'. They revealed that whilst they did not always agree with the decisions their parents made, they understood the dilemmas that they faced and the reasons for such constraints. As a result, they went to some lengths to appease parental fears in order to achieve their own aims. The choice of career for some unmarried South Asian women may be constrained, but the progression from school to university and fulfilment of personal ambition is not

always limited by parental influences. It is worth pointing out that while parental influences seemed to handicap some of the South Asian women's aims, the women demonstrated confidence and commitment in the choices that they made.

The examples of cultural and patriarchal constraints highlighted in this study pertain to women of South Asian backgrounds, but this does not mean that it is only these women who find their access to higher education, or choice of career restricted by such processes. Zita's story demonstrates that patriarchal ideologies of the 'woman's place being in the home' exists in society generally, and is sanctioned by government, ensuring that some women's freedom to study or work outside the home is curtailed. As a group single parent women often find it difficult to achieve their aims because they tend to be on low incomes whilst the cost of childcare can be extremely high. For those women who choose to reject patriarchal gender role ideologies, whether they are white or black, the penalities that are sometimes imposed by society can be very high.

The influence of 'culture' on the lives of women of South Asian origin demands a final word. It was earlier revealed that Zita turned to Christianity in search of a 'new meaning' to her life after her divorce and experience of family rejection. Though Zita appears to have rejected a major cultural influence (Hinduism) on her way of life, she illustrates the point made earlier that culture is not a static phenomenon but is continuously evolving so that new cultures which combine traditional and Western aspects are constantly being created. On the one hand, the influence of traditional customs was evident in the way that Zita dressed, and on the other, the impact

that Christianity had on her was also apparent. The joining of two cultures was not an unusual feature among the South Asian women. Sita, for example began attending a New Testament Church of God (an offshoot of the Church of England) after starting her degree at Rosehall, and later married her English husband in a New Testament church wearing traditional South Asian dress. Her wedding dress and her new faith represented the two halves of her life - South Asian and Western.

> I was determined to make our wedding as mixed as possible. The food was mixed, the music was mixed, the guests were mixed. Everything was mixed to show my family that just because I had a different religion and I was marrying somebody white, that it didn't mean that I was turning into a white woman, and that I wasn't rejecting everything that I was brought up with. For example, the wedding service was conducted in Punjabi and English, and things that might cause embarrassment like, when the Pastor said: "Now you can kiss the bride", so as not to cause offence to my family and our Sikh traditions, my husband kissed my hand instead which was a nice gesture. (Sita)

The extent of traditional religious influences on some South Asian women's lives changed over the years as their outlook on life changed, or events occurred which forced them to question their faith. Both Rita and Ranjit were born abroad and had been brought up as 'strict Hindus' but they moved away from Hinduism after studying, marrying and travelling widely. Ranjit, seriously questioned Hinduism when 'nothing in her life seemed to be going

right'. Whilst these women sought new meanings to their lives through other religions (just as Westerners have historically turned to Eastern religions) it must be reiterated that they did not reject traditional cultural values outright. They created a new way of living which incorporated different aspects and enabled them to exist according to how they saw fit.

CONCLUSION

This chapter set out to discover why black women choose to become primary teachers. It has been shown that black women's choices of primary teaching as a career are influenced by many factors, such as convenience, parenting, racism, the desire to contribute to children's development and awareness, migration and parental influences. Other factors include the positive experiences women had of school and the desire to share that through teaching.

One of the main factors cited by Singh (1988) and Swann (1985) for the under-representation of black teachers is racism. Despite the negative experiences of the British education system which many black people endure, from the responses given by some of the women it can be argued that racism is not necessarily a deterrent but could, paradoxically motivate them to become teachers. These student teachers in particular believed that their qualification as primary teachers would enable them to help black pupils to challenge racism, achieve their full potential and to be successful in adult life.

It has been suggested that women enter primary teaching because of their gender (Burgess and Carter, 1992) and their 'liking' for young children (Hill, 1994; Nias, 1989, Clarricoates, 1988). However, when we consider the specific factors that affect women's career decisions, it becomes clear that women are motivated to become primary teachers for more complex reasons. For most of the black women student teachers their reasons were pragmatic and often dictated by racialised and gendered experiences. Many women become teachers because they do not have suitable alternative careers to choose from. The lack of choice is often due to their family responsibilities. The hours of teaching and the holidays that are given make it easier for women to accommodate their childcare needs. This is a common feature amongst many women (black and white) who choose teaching. However, this is especially so for single parents. Patriarchal notions of the 'woman's place being in the home' to nurture her family partly account for the different stages at which some women are able, or need to enter teaching. Black women, in common with all women, are often forced by the absence of childcare facilities to choose teaching as a career, and as a way of realising their wish for a career.

Whilst it is evident that primary teaching and parenting are linked and defined in patriarchy as the major responsibility for women, none of the women in this study entered primary teaching to be 'motherly' teachers. Two women were initially encouraged by their parents and family to enter teaching because teaching was thought to be a 'good job for a woman'. Although both women operated within this ideology when they entered teaching, they did not view teaching in this way. Teaching like other careers was regarded as a

means of gaining economic independence and freedom outside the home. It is important to note that although some women expressed a preference to teach in the lower primary age range, none thought that this entailed 'mothering' pupils. Early years pupils were seen as offering the 'most exciting' prospect for developing childrens' potential (MacLure, 1993). Several women had set their sights on teaching at the upper end of the junior school (9-11) but most wanted to teach right across the age groups. They hoped that the various age groups would provide them with a variety of learning experiences and enable them to aid the development of all primary children.

For some of the women the experience of teaching during school work placements enabled them to gain an insight into teaching - albeit at a superficial level. However, none of the women educated in Britain indicated that they had received advice on teaching as a possible career, or had encountered black teachers during the course of their schooling. It is noticeable that despite the absence of black role models in these women's schooling only one cited this as a reason for deciding to enter teaching. Duncan (1992) believes that the type of careers advice given to black pupils reflects the low expectations teachers have of black pupils (see also Verma and Neasham, 1990). From this it is logical to propose that black pupils be given careers advice on teaching, and that opportunities be created for black teachers to outline their first hand experiences of teaching in schools where there are no black teachers. Both initiatives would go some way towards alleviating the black teacher shortage.

Whilst the experience of school may encourage some black women to enter teaching it has to be remembered that many black women enter teaching in search of a change of career, educational stimulation and financial independence. Many choose teaching after having had children. Others may not have realised their full academic potential whilst at school and may see teaching as a way of achieving this. All of these factors would need to be taken into consideration in teaching publicity materials and ITE courses if teaching is to be seen as an attractive profession to enter by more black women. As most women enter schools as parents it would be an idea to highlight the contribution that black teachers could make in school, especially as the traditional image of teaching in most schools is one of white middle-class teachers. In addition, if the supply of unmarried South Asian women teachers is to be increased, schools and higher education institutions would need to take account of and address cultural and religious influences, and how these operate within patriarchy to restrict women's choices.

The gendered and racialised experiences of these black women highlight the complexity of women's experiences, and enable us to see how such experiences can affect women's lives and their choice of careers. We might also concur with Troyna (1994) that:

> People are not completely free to do what they want. They occupy specific cultural positions, negotiate particular value systems and operate within a matrix of power relations inscribed by the discourses of class, 'race' and gender (Troyna, 1994:336).

There may be many reasons other than those cited for black and indeed white women choosing to become teachers. If we are to understand what some of these factors are, ultimately what is needed is a wider exploration of the biographies of the women who choose teaching as a career.

In the following chapter I outline the policies and practices of Rosehall College of Higher Education and examine whether the concerns of black women students are taken into consideration in order to retain and facilitate their progression in ITE. I also explore black student experiences of ITE.

CHAPTER 3

BLACK STUDENTS INSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I concentrate on the institutional experiences of black women student teacher's, that is, the situations they highlighted as being of importance to themselves and how they felt those situations affected their experiences within the College. I examine their reception of and their reaction to multicultural and equal opportunities policies at Rosehall College. My aim is to assess the effectiveness of these policies in dealing with the concerns of black women students. In the first part of the chapter I examine the notion of multicultural education as applied by the College through its curriculum. I explore the extent to which the principles of multiculturalism as practised in the College, support students in their learning. In the second half of the chapter I examine the College's equal opportunities policy, its purpose, in what way it differs from the multicultural education policy and whether it is effective in providing a framework for supporting women students. I then look at how equal opportunities as a curriculum issue is perceived and applied. Finally, the more general attitudes of staff and students are examined.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

In light of the recommendations made by the Rampton Report (1981) and the Swann Report (1985) many local education authorities forged ahead with producing multicultural education policies for use in schools. These two reports cited racism and racial disadvantage as being contributory factors to the educational experience and achievement of black pupils. It was hoped that multicultural education would help to combat racial disadvantage and redress the balance of black underachievement in education (Swann, 1985).

One of the main principles behind multicultural education is to provide 'education for all' (Swann, 1985). Multicultural education aims to reflect the multiracial nature of contemporary Britain and by so doing equip individuals with information about other cultures. It is hoped that this will enable individuals to challenge the negative racial attitudes they might hold about those perceived to be culturally and racially different. There is an assumption here that racial prejudice and racial discrimination results from individual ignorance and ill-logical argument (Gillborn, 1995; Carby, 1982). By informing individuals about diverse cultures there is an expectation that this will raise awareness, generate respect and understanding between groups and lead to an appreciation of a pluralistic society. One of the main aims of multicultural education is to have a non-prejudiced society which supports equality and social justice (Swann, 1985).

It is important to note that at the time of the development and introduction of Rosehall's multicultural and later equal

opportunities policies, all institutions were encouraged to have similar policies (DES, 1984, 1989). My remarks in this chapter refer to that period and should be viewed in that context. Today, few institutions are encouraged, and one might argue that the diminished place of multicultural education and equal opportunities issues in the 1988 Education Reform Act, discourages such policies.

It is not my intention in this chapter to examine the College's multicultural education policy as a whole, or to enter into the debates relating to multicultural education (see for example, Troyna and Hatcher, 1992; Rattansi, 1992; Figueroa, 1991; Troyna, 1989, 1987; Mullard, 1985). The purpose, whatever the criticisms of multicultural education might be, is to assess the effectiveness of the College's stated policy in relation to the curriculum and black student experience of that curriculum. It is worth noting that although this chapter includes the views of PGCE students, the issues highlighted relate in the main to the concerns which the B.Ed students raised about their institutional experience at the College.

Black student experience of multicultural education

Prior to their enrolment at the College most of the black women in this study had experienced an educational system in Britain which had reflected the interests of the majority population. As a result of the ethnocentric education they had received these women were 'eager' to engage with a curriculum that would not only highlight the multiracial nature of society, but enable them to teach black as well as white pupils in schools. The College's multicultural education

policy outlines the importance of presenting a world view in teaching:

> i) Those teaching should realise, however specialist their subject may be, it is always possible to teach with a perspective which has a world view rather than an ethnocentric one.
>
> ii) The curriculum needs to reflect, in appropriate ways, the changing nature of British society and its migration history in both national and local terms.
>
> iii) Opportunities should be taken, where possible, to revise and update syllabuses so that they reflect the multi-racial nature of our society.
>
> iv) Resources - teaching, library and other media. Teachers and support staff need to include materials representing the different cultures in contemporary Britain and to devise criteria to select materials which do not include racist stereotypes or negative images as matters of information. (Section 3, para 3.1)

This view is supported by the DES. According to the DES, ITE courses:

> should prepare students for teaching the full range of pupils for the diversity of ability, behaviour, social background and ethnic and cultural origin they are likely to encounter among

pupils in ordinary school ... (DES 1989a, Circular 24/89 section 6.3).

Despite the above, student statements indicated that there was little evidence of this in the curriculum they received.

> Everything was just geared to being English, nothing to do with West Indian, Asian or other cultures, or how to use these cultures to benefit the whole education system. I thought they would have been more culturally aware but they don't really know anything about black cultures and that's quite sad. (Chloe)

> I thought my teaching degree would be a way of exploring different cultures but it has not lived up to that. There's no support for multicultural issues ... I think they have been ignored because they are not seen as relevant to the majority of people coming here. (Marsha)

> There's no input on Asian languages and cultures or other multi-ethnic issues. If you haven't got the same language and culture they (college) don't want to know about it, not really. There are lots of practical ideas that they could introduce students to, to use in schools but they don't explore them because they are not seen as important to the majority of the population. (Jasmine)

Ladson-Billings argues that 'multicultural illiteracy' is the 'inability to be conversant with basic ideas, personalities and events that

reflect the perspectives and experiences of people other than white, middle-class males' (1991:151). From student accounts it would appear that 'multicultural illiteracy' was widespread amongst tutors. A Guardian report (1981) referred to by Carby (1982) noted that 'most white schools have carried on teaching as though multiethnic Britain never happened' (ibid:195). The above excerpts would seem to suggest that a similar situation existed in the College. They are also illustrative of a view put forward by Gillborn (1995). He argues that some policies,

> serve a primarily cosmetic function; existing only because they are required (by central and/or local government) or as a politically expedient symbol of the school's awareness of particular issues (Gillborn, 1995:119).

Although the College's multicultural policy was devised at a time when such policies were favoured by LEA's and central government, the College may have been well intentioned in its aim to provide a multicultural curriculum for its students. However, Gurnah has pointed out that one of the reasons why equal opportunities policies fail is due to the fact that they are usually 'undermined by those who profess support for and are employed to deliver them' (1991:13). This point can be equally applied to other policies.

> We had to write an assignment on a scientist and he (the lecturer) gave us a list of examples of people that we could study and towards the end of the lesson he said: "Oh by the way don't forget there are lots of non-white people who have

created lots of good inventions". But he wasn't able to give an example, so he didn't encourage anybody to do it. (Zita)

While the science tutor gave the impression that he was in favour of presenting a multicultural perspective in science, his inability to come up with any examples undermined the importance of researching this area and hampered access to such information. If the tutor had been more positive in his attitude to multicultural teaching the task of implementing multicultural ideas in science and other areas might have been viewed more favourably by the students. It could be argued that the absence of multicultural issues in ITE might encourage some student teachers to research the area for themselves. For example,

I just decided that as a black person it was time that I did something on multicultural education because I don't want to be the same as them (white teachers) and just pay lip service to it. (Bev)

However, the likely result of the tutor's lack of enthusiasm would be that the students themselves would conclude that the subject is not worth further inquiry.

I would like to know what black people have contributed to science, to education, to anything. But you know that they won't give you that kind of information. So why bother? (Naomi)

Ladson-Billings states that it is the teachers who are most likely to come into daily contact with various aspects of diversity who 'know the least about it' (1991:154). This was a common experience of the black students interviewed.

> In the first year I wasn't aware of things going on in the curriculum because the schools I went to never presented me with a different outlook. Because of that I never questioned it at Rosehall. But as you get older I think the ethnocentricity of things you question. In humanities, history, science and maths we have never done anything that has not been European or British based. We are going to have to go into schools teaching children who aren't necessarily British, so I expected a bit more.... When we go into schools they (college) tell us to see if the schools have got a multicultural policy and if they are implementing it, but it's not happening here. So how can students go into schools and implement what is not practised in their own institution? If I was to teach history from a different perspective I wouldn't know how to go about it because we've never been taught how to do it.... They haven't even got dual text books, yet they are always saying how they are pro-multicultural education. (Muna)

Although one would expect a multicultural education policy to ensure that student teachers are provided with culturally diverse teaching materials and knowledge, Muna's comments help to illustrate the inadequacy of a paper policy which is not accompanied by action and/or monitoring. They also highlight the double standards that seemed to be applied in the College. On the one hand,

students were informed of the importance of assessing a school's multicultural policy during teaching practice and establishing if the school was actually implementing it, and on the other, the ethnocentric curriculum they experienced at the College made it difficult for them to effectively assess such a policy or indeed its implementation. The sense of exclusion these students felt from the subject areas they studied was further heightened by their feeling of not being properly equipped to teach black children in schools (this point is explored further in chapter four).

> We were discussing the Victorians and it was suggested that we could tell children to bring something from home representative of that period. My parents were born in the West Indies. It occurred to me that there was nothing Victorian in our family. Things like that would put black children at a disadvantage. ... They say bring a photograph of your family line, now some families can go back to their great great grandparents in the nineteenth century, but the furthest I could go back to is to my grandparents. In the West Indies photographs were too expensive in those days. College doesn't take things like that into consideration when they're telling you what you can do in a lesson. I think they should be aware that there are limitations in particular subjects for black people or black children. They tell you to differentiate your tasks but they don't seem to consider the aspect of being West Indian or Asian. (Olive)

The terms of reference operating in ITE (and higher education) are white and middle-class (McKellar, 1989), so this may account for the

type of topic areas that some tutors at the College considered appropriate for students to explore in schools. Focusing on the Victorians as a teaching tool appears to be common practice for many teachers (Warham, 1993). It seems unfair to criticise tutors for not presenting students with an alternative topic, since it is likely that they themselves would have been taught within a context of British ethnocentrism. Nevertheless, Olive's remarks help to illustrate that dominant groups in society perceive and evaluate other ethnic groups from within their own experiences. Gillborn (1990) has argued that an ethnocentric standpoint can lead to racist consequences. It can also have class implications. The lecturer's approach does not reflect the multiethnic nature of contemporary British society, neither does it take into account the peculiarities of different class groupings. Black children as well as white working-class children would find themselves excluded from the topic work (Blair and Maylor, 1993).

Wright (1992) has suggested that there is a need for all teachers to experience positively a multicultural curriculum which will enable them to foster the development and abilities of all pupils. An awareness of, and an understanding of cultural diversity is considered important if teachers are to be effective in schools. But students pointed out that this was not part of their experience.

One of my tutor's asked me: "Don't you know any English nursery rhymes?" When I said: "No" she informed me of the necessity of knowing English nursery rhymes for teaching English children. There was no consideration for the other children that are likely to be in the class. I know quite a few

nursery rhymes which are not English which my mother and grandmother taught me. I think they have a place in schools just like English ones ... I know that everyone has got their own ideas and views but we should be able to share them with each other. I thought that was the whole point of being at college. I did not expect to sit there and be preached at with one view. I thought there would have been a sharing of views and ideas with us reaching conclusions together. Things are never just black and white there are grey areas in between. I don't think you should be restricted or told that something which is part and parcel of your culture that it is not applicable to teaching in English schools, or that you should not try to cater for a wider pupil group. After all the children are not all English. (Olive)

There is no discussion on the course of cultural differences. In one of our classes we were talking about the different types of stories that we could use with children and some of the students could not understand why the story, 'The Three Little Pigs' would be offensive to Muslim children. They felt it was just a story. Ok it is only a story, but it has religious implications for many. (Zaria)

Throughout this research the black women student teachers continued to express their anxiety about feeling ill prepared to go into schools and implement a multicultural curriculum. Findings by Barrett et al. (1992) and Siraj-Blatchford (1991) indicate that such concerns are not confined to the black students I studied. Arguably, what these students needed was precise information about different

cultures and the skills to sensitively explore multicultural issues with pupils. It seems safe to assume that if teachers themselves are poorly trained in multiculturalism they will not only undervalue other cultures, but undereducate children in the process. From this it would appear that the meaning of an 'entitlement' curriculum (Gill, 1991, DES, 1989a) would need to be discussed with students so that they are made aware of the ways in which some pupils may be disadvantaged.

Black teachers as 'professional ethnics'[1]

Student accounts indicated that they were sometimes called upon to make up for what they considered to be the lack of multicultural provision in their course. As one student pointed out, there were different ways of doing this.

> If they (lecturers) are doing multi-ethnic education they will direct their questions to you as if you know all about it because you are black. I found that most irritating. How would I know just because I'm black? Or they would ask you what languages you speak when they are talking about language diversity. They would always assume that you speak various creoles simply because you're black. Why would I speak more dialect than a white person? It's just the assumption that because you are black you will know these things. All the things they tell you not to assume about children they assume about you at college. (Ella)

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[1] 'Professional ethnic' - the assumption that by virtue of ethnicity, black people have to perform certain 'ethnic' related tasks or roles.

Staff appear to assume that skin colour gives black students access to information which is denied to white students. Such assumptions fuel the idea that black students and teachers are 'professional ethnics'; their professional status being defined by their ethnicity rather than their knowledge or qualifications (Blair, 1994).

> They assume that because I'm Asian I should know everything multi-ethnic but I don't. Once, our class was doing something in relation to Diwali and I was asked to do a quick summary of it. I did, but afterwards I thought about it: "Why should I have done it? Why couldn't somebody white look into it?" It just like it's Asian so give it to an Asian person, or if it's something to do with African-Caribbean culture, storytelling or whatever, give it to an African-Caribbean person. (Muna)

Bernice demonstrates the frustrations experienced by the black students.

> I want the tutor to tell me just like he's telling everybody else. I might have a little insight into it but I want to know his own viewpoint. I'm not there to help him with his lecture. When I'm doing my seminar the lecturer does not help me out in mine. I'm supposed to research my topic in order to help other people. That's why they get us to do it. Find out all this information, put it on a list so that you can hand it to other people. But they're not doing that for us when it comes to multicultural education. (Bernice)

However, she also shows that black students can and do reject the label 'professional ethnic' by resisting such categorisation.

> In humanities we were talking about the transportation of bananas and at the end of the lesson the lecturer said: "Well Bernice you seem to be the obvious person to ask about bananas". I said: "We don't have a lot of banana boats in Croydon". (Bernice)

The policy rhetoric states that,

> We believe that students can make a valuable contribution to the development of multiracial education. It is, therefore, important that they be encouraged to play their part. (Section 2.5)

It is clear from the above statement that the policy makers saw all students as being able to contribute to multicultural education at the College. The policy also states that,

> the personal experiences of students from black groups could be used to advantage in enriching the collective knowledge of the institution. (Section 2.5)

It could be argued that staff interpretation of the second statement led some tutors to draw specifically on the resources of the black students in their classes, rather than the class as a whole. Tutors may genuinely have believed that this was the best way of valuing and offering different cultural perspectives to the wider audience, but, a

number of problems are created by this approach. Firstly, as Gillborn (1995) points out, black students can feel demeaned by such an approach. Secondly, tutors are likely to abrogate their responsibilities as indicated by the science tutor's remark. Thirdly, white students are unlikely to see the need for them to contribute to the debate or to do their own research. Adopting this approach in a situation where the background of a particular student is not defined carries the presumption that black students, unlike white students, possess specialized cultural knowledge. It also creates the impression that only black people are party to different cultural activities and experiences. Needless to say, skin colour in contemporary Britain does not determine the particular cultural, linguistic or ethnic group to which an individual belongs.

One of the weaknesses of multicultural education is the failure to realise that identities are multiple as well as unstable (Pinar, 1993; Gilroy, 1992) and that individuals have the power to define their own identities (Cambridge, 1992; Hall, 1992; Ward, 1990). It also fails to recognise that there are many factors which help to determine our identities or the identities we adopt (see chapters two and four). A black student, for example, may choose to reject her/his parental cultural heritage in the attempt to gain acceptance by the dominant white group. Many of the black students in this study felt that society forces them to deny some aspects of their identity in exchange for wider acceptance. When Sita began applying for teaching posts she felt under pressure to wear western clothes for interviews (this is explored in specific detail below). Harvey argues that multicultural education fails to address how cultural 'difference' is 'accommodated into existing social relations' (1993:5). From student

accounts it would appear that Rosehall staff failed to take on board the complexities of cultural 'difference' and explore them in a way that would make students understand, firstly, that every individual is different. Secondly, that there are cultural similarities as well as differences. Thirdly, that each person has something individual to contribute to teaching and fourthly, that diversity and 'difference' are an acceptable part of society.

It might be argued that asking black students to discuss individual cultural experiences allows staff to examine cultural differences between a multiplicity of groups, but this ignores the fact that cultures are not 'coherent wholes, with fixed identities - equal' (Liu, 1991:157; see also Giroux, 1991; Sarup, 1991). The 'ties that bind' often mask very deep rooted differences and veil historical and contemporary oppression. Competing perspectives within cultural groups may not surface in a classroom discussion, or an understanding of how difference is created in both domination and opposition (Giroux, 1991; Pinar, 1993).

The fact that black people (like white people) are not an homogenous group and that they have complex identities is continuously demonstrated by the number of black perspectives that are in existence at any one time (see for example, Modood, 1994; Boyce Davies, 1994; Brah, 1992). Black students, however, felt that they were expected to speak for all black people.

> You're black Yula, give us your view of the black perspective. (Yula)

In one of my options I always get the usual: "What do you think then Bev?" The ball is always thrown into my court, but I usually tell them that I cannot speak for all black people I can only speak for myself. (Bev)

An exploration of different cultural experiences may help student teachers and teacher educators to broaden their thinking and understanding about different cultural groups (Cohen, 1989), but one of the difficulties for these black students was their consistent awareness of being 'different'.

I thought the college would have been more culturally diverse but it isn't. I remember coming in the first year and thinking my goodness! I was one of three ethnic minorities then, nothing has changed. (Muna)

When you go into town you see so many different cultures but here (college) it's as if it's a different world entirely. (Sita)

It was pointed out in the introductory chapter that black students are under-represented in ITE and in teaching as a whole. While the number of black students at the College would seem to be representative of black students more generally in ITE and higher education, the absence of a larger black student population at the College increased the pressure these students felt to contribute to discussions on multiculturalism. Muna rightly suggests that providing cultural information should not be restricted to those who belong, or are assumed to belong to the culture. The stereotyping of black students as 'professional ethnics' removes the responsibility

from the teaching staff to provide information about different cultures, and inhibits the development of the appropriate skills for teaching in a culturally diverse society (see chapter four). Furthermore if black students are only perceived to be 'professional ethnics' and teacher educators reinforce such notions in their approach, there is nothing to prevent teachers making similar assumptions about the pupils in their class.

Earlier I stated that the policy rhetoric underlined the importance of staff providing a curriculum that reflected 'the changing nature of British society and its migration history' (Section 3, para 3.1). It would seem that staff understanding of the changing and diverse nature of British society was conceived within an essentialist and racialized notion of difference. This led some tutors to focus their attention on post-war black migration to Britain and not migration as a whole, or within the United Kingdom. The effect, therefore, was to emphasize the 'differences' of black students from white students and to ignore the differences within these groups. The similarities and common experiences between black and white groups (especially those between working-class black and white people) were also ignored. Sita felt that her 'differences' were accentuated by lecturers who frequently asked her what languages she spoke. The intention was to demonstrate to the class the values and learning opportunities offered by diversity. Sita however, felt that it was her ethnicity which was made to stand out because white students who might equally have spoken a variety of languages or dialects were not requested to highlight their experiences. Interestingly, the policy places emphasis on staff being familiar with 'the variety of languages used by students' as this would help them to 'make

appropriate use of 'standard' English, dialect and bilingualism' in the classroom (Section, 3.2). However, the fact that other language forms were not explored by tutors reinforced Sita's perception that black students were regarded as being 'different'. She suggested that her inclusion by tutors in discussions on language diversity (especially those concerning South Asian children's language development) and not in other curriculum areas, was interpreted by white students as meaning that black students are more suited to certain areas in teaching than others. One example is in language support.

> When we were studying for our final exams ... one of the girls got a job in Hungary to teach in a nursery school. She wanted me to tell her about bilingualism. I said: "Why? I have got the same notes you have got". She said: "Well it's obvious you would know more about it than I do". (Sita)

This type of stereotyping can have drawbacks because it can lead to the belief that all South Asian people are bi/multilinguals, or to the erroneous belief that black teachers find it easier to get employment regardless of ability because they have 'expert cultural knowledge'. Crozier and Menter (1993) have however, shown that students for whom English is an additional language often find it difficult to secure employment. This continuous highlighting of 'differences' had particularly negative effects on students. During her fourth year, Sita found job interviews extremely difficult. She was anxious to downplay her 'differences' and to show that she could 'fit in'. If she wore a shalwar kameez (traditional dress of the Punjab) to any interview she felt this would highlight her 'outsider' status and possibly give the impression that her strengths lay in multicultural

education, or that she could only teach black pupils. Sita's fears are not unfounded. Osler (1989) has shown that Asian women teachers who wear traditional clothing to school are often perceived as occupying 'ethnic' teaching roles, like language support or Section 11 teaching. Although annoyed at having to make these considerations and choose between traditional and western dress, Sita felt compelled to do so. She felt it was important to present herself as someone who is 'no different to white teachers'. Consequently, her dress symbolized her ability to 'fit in'. Sita also resented the pressure she felt to apologise for her skin colour.

> I have certainly felt on going to interviews that I have had to compensate for my colour. Almost to say, look it doesn't matter that I'm black because I have got all of this. My experiences are so wide. (Sita)

Her belief in the need to 'compensate for' her different skin colour underlines the extent to which racial and cultural discrimination exerts particular pressure on black people in British society. It also highlights how cultural and racial identities are an integral part of power relationships in society. From Sita's experience it is possible to see how racial and/or cultural 'differences' can be reinforced in everyday life in ITE.

A different understanding of diversity and difference was needed at the College because of the direct effects that this had on student choices. As a result of the constant questioning by staff and references to the languages she spoke, Jasmine decided not to opt for classroom teaching on completion of her PGCE course. She thought

her language skills could be better utilised by becoming a Section 11 language support teacher. She internalized the racialized idea that her language skills needed to be compartmentalized and used with specific groups. Consequently, she did not see the contribution that she could make within the classroom to both black and white pupils. Although Jasmine had initially expressed her intention to become an infant teacher, she took on the stereotyped 'ethnic' teaching roles that her tutors impressed upon her. This kind of pigeon-holing of people on their physical appearance has led to negative evaluations of black teachers' capabilities in other areas of the curriculum (see for example, Rhakit, 1991). Being a Section 11 teacher may have its merits but if black students are encouraged to see this aspect as the only role for them in teaching this can only be harmful for themselves and represents a loss of valuable skills to the teaching profession as a whole.

Black students perceptions of white students attitudes to multicultural education

As this research was primarily concerned with black women's experiences of ITE it was thought important to not only explore issues which the women highlighted as having had an effect on their ITE experience, but also to examine factors which they felt had an impact on their relationship with students in the College. The black students highlighted two areas which gave them cause for concern: white student attitude to multicultural education as a whole, and in particular, white student attitude to black pupil language diversity in schools. In this section I shall discuss what was perceived to be white students attitudes to multicultural education.

This will be followed by a more detailed analysis of language in the curriculum.

The women I interviewed felt that most of the white students in their classes had negative views towards multiculural education. For example,

> In my English specialism group we watched a video on using books in a multicultural environment. Afterwards we were asked to discuss it and I was in a group of all white girls. One said: "Well that video is no use to me because that's not the type of area I come from and I won't be teaching in schools like that". I was shocked. The respect or value for a debate about diversity just wasn't there. That really summed up the attitude of all the white students. I thought that they would have been broadminded. (Gita)

The National Curriculum Council (NCC) Guidance document (1990) argues that multicultural education would help pupils to question prejudice and develop open-mindedness. As such it is considered essential in the preparation of pupils for life in a multicultural society. The NCC (1991) also states, that 'multicultural education is the responsibility of teachers in all schools' (cited by Equality Assurance, 1992:4). The above excerpt would seem to indicate that some white students at the College did not think that multicultural education was relevant for the predominantly or all white schools they were likely to teach in (Ross and Smith, 1992; Menter, 1989a; Troyna, 1989). The period under discussion was one of ideological change in which a shift to the right in political discourses, led to

widespread media and populist demonization of multicultural and equal opportunities policies and practices. The context was therefore not one which favoured an open-minded approach to these issues and may therefore have contributed to the white students rejection of multicultural education.

> When you talk about multicultural education they (white students) will say: "Oh no, not that again!" I've found that if you want white students to talk to you don't mention multicultural education. (Marsha)

According to Miles and Middleton, the National Curriculum is the means by which 'monoculturalism is to replace multiculturalism, irrespective of the social context of schooling and the wide range of cultural backgrounds from which children come' (1993:112). The resource constraints that most schools now function under and the necessity for pupils to meet attainment targets make it difficult for teachers to deviate from the nationalistic (Menter, 1992; Minhas, 1988) inclinations of the National Curriculum. The black students were aware of the low status assigned to multicultural issues in the National Curriculum, however, as students, they were more concerned that their interest in multicultural education was not understood by their white counterparts at the College. They felt that such a lack of understanding contributed to the type of remarks white students made when it was discovered that black students had chosen to include multicultural issues in their work. For example,

> When I was discussing my dissertation with my English specialism group I found that mine was the only one which

centred around anything to do with multicultural issues. It interested me and I did it because I really wanted to ... but it was assumed that this was the kind of thing I would do because I'm black. There was an attitude of: "of course Sita would do that kind of thing". (Sita)

Language in the curriculum

In the previous section it was argued that black students believed that multicultural education was not viewed positively by some white students within the College. This view was given further credence by the negative attitudes of first year white students to language diversity. The first year B.Ed students were introduced to the role of language in the school via a lecture on this subject, and this was followed up by seminars in which students were asked to be responsive to the diverse cultural and language needs of children in schools. The following excerpt is illustrative of the black women's response to what they considered to be the level of understanding and acceptance of diversity amongst the white students in their year.

I felt quite angry that people with views like that were coming here to be trained as teachers. There were so many of them. Some felt that the (Asian) children's parents should teach them English and that it wasn't the job of the teacher. Others said that they shouldn't be in the classroom if they couldn't speak English. One said: "If they come here they have to accept our ways. They should be prepared to speak in English not in their own languages". Another felt that the

only language that should be spoken in English schools is English and that it was rude to do otherwise. ... It's quite distressing to know that these views are held by people who want to become teachers. (Bev)

Wright (1992) and Moolla (1991) have provided further examples of the widespread nature of such attitudes to black pupils in British schools. Marsha, a fourth year student provided another example.

> When I mentioned multicultural reading as a way of looking at other cultures one of the student's said: "We brought them here when we were short of labour but it doesn't mean that we have to cater for their children in schools". (Marsha)

Whilst it is accepted that individuals are party to many influences, one of the many expectations of higher education is that students will develop and be open to new ideas. The College's multicultural policy states that,

> ... students need to be aware of, and have positive attitudes towards, bi-lingualism, dialect speech and the teaching of English as a second language ... (Section 3.3).

The black students who were present throughout the seminars felt that the white students were not appreciative or supportive of linguistic diversity, as the ability to speak languages other than English was viewed as a 'deficiency'; and as being a 'black problem'. According to the DES,

... students should learn to guard against preconceptions based on the race, gender religion or other attributes of pupils and understand the need to promote equal opportunities (DES, 1989a, Circular 24/89 section 6.3).

From student accounts it would appear that some white students had misconceived notions about black pupils and language diversity. For example, South Asian children in British schools were regarded as being 'new arrivals', and they were the only ones deemed to have difficulties in acquiring English.

> Several students made the point that Asian children cannot speak English at school because they are new to the country. (Gita)

Data which challenged such preconceptions was dismissed. This would seem to support Noordhoff and Kleinfeld's contention that student teachers 'encounter new information through the lens of their knowledge and existing belief systems' (1993:37). In his survey of the perceptions of first year student teachers' Cohen (1989) found that some white students had ill-informed and prejudiced views about the cultures and backgrounds of black people (see also Figueroa, 1991). As discussions about language do not appear to have taken into account the theory that children's language acquisition might be facilitated through their indigenous language (see for example, Corsetti, 1993) it seems likely that students would have gone into schools with their ethnocentric perceptions intact. Although most of the Italian children who attend local schools speak English as a second language, this did not come up in the discussions.

According to the black students, the white students focused their attention on the languages of black minorities; reinforcing their status as outsiders. It was suggested by the women that several of the white students felt there was no need to value (black) language diversity, or to cater for black pupils in their teaching as they were a minority in schools, and that enabling English language acquisition was the job of parents alone and not of teachers. It could be argued that one of the reasons why these white students found it difficult to appreciate black language diversity, is because they realised that the presence of such pupils in the classroom would mean having to acquire extra skills (on their part) to meet the needs of pupils whose experience of language, 'is likely to be greater than that of their monoglot peers' (DES, 1988, para. 12.9; see also Gillborn, 1995).

In the student discussions it was taken as self evident that living in Britain meant assimilating into a British cultural heritage and rejecting one's own language in deference to the English language. It is true that the English language is the dominant mode of instruction in British schools. But the issue of language and power (see Giroux, 1992; Devonish, 1986; Dalphinis, 1985) was absent from student analyses, so they were unable to move beyond the narrow conception of English as 'best' without a wider examination of language as a tool of learning, and to understand its political and ideological role in schools.

Reeds (1994) argues that recognition and support of the indigenous languages of bilingual pupils is essential for developing their self esteem and enhancing their educational progress. Article 30 of the

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child points out that 'children of minority communities ... have the right to enjoy their own culture and to practice their own religion and language' (quoted by Osler, 1994:145). Implicit in this argument is the need to value and respect cultural diversity. It would appear from student accounts that their support for language diversity was misinterpreted by some white students as special pleading for black pupils to be taught their indigenous languages in the classroom. However, as Yasmin reveals such fears were baseless.

> Asian people are not asking or expecting their children to be taught Punjabi, Urdu, Gujerati, Sylheti or whatever, it is just that a little language and cultural value would be appreciated. (Yasmin)

The opportunity to raise their linguistic awareness was welcomed by the black students. At the end of the seminars, it was however, apparent that the isolated efforts of two staff members in one curriculum area (over a three week period) were insufficient to foster a wider understanding of diversity and a reflexive approach to learning and teaching.

> One of the students told the group that if Asian children can't speak English, English children will suffer because teachers will spend less time with them. (Bernice)

As a general rule individuals tend to build explanations around previously formed beliefs 'regardless of whether or not these explanations are accurate' (Johnson, 1994:448). This might help to

explain the racism underlying the above assumption which negates the contribution and benefits bi/multilingual speakers bring to the classroom (Conteh, 1992; NCC, 1991; Grugeon and Woods, 1990; Wiles, 1985), and the learning opportunities they provide monolingual teachers (Reeds, 1994; Sneddon, 1993). It might also help to explain why some white teachers experience diversity as 'a problem'.

The statement attributed to a white student by Bernice, would also appear to reflect sentiments similar to that of the 'new racism' (see preface). In short, the 'new racism' sees 'alien' (black) cultures as presenting a threat to the 'national way of life' (Barker, 1981). According to Short (1994) it is 'misconceptions rather than adorned ignorance that have the power to transform the unfamiliar into the threatening' (ibid:338). He argues that it is the way in which minority group cultures are presented which can cause them to be rejected. He cites the ritual slaughter of meat by Muslims as one example which may increase prejudice due to a lack of understanding. Short (1994) suggests that prejudice will be less prevalent if multicultural education is accompanied by an examination of the cognitive basis of prejudice and cultural misconceptions are addressed. Whilst such proposals may achieve multiculturalists' aims of reducing prejudice it depends on the ability of the class teacher to implement them. If the teacher's knowledge is based on misconceptions and those misconceptions together with her/his own fears of cultural difference are not examined within teacher education, the misinformation that surrounds cultural diversity remains, as will fears that the education of English (white) children will be hindered by black pupils. It is worth pointing out that even when the cognitive basis of prejudice

has been examined with students this does not always lead to the rejection of racist beliefs or attitudes (see for example, Davies and Hufton, 1994). This is probably due to the fact that 'race' thinking is not an individual phenomenon. It '... is woven into the very fabric of our society' (Brazier, 1985, quoted by Bianchi-Cooke, 1994:62) and is regenerated politically in the ideological messages that people receive (Harvey, 1993; Essed, 1991).

One of the criticisms made of multicultural education is that it does not explore or develop an understanding of structural and institutional inequalities based on 'race'. Antiracists argue that it is racism that perpetuates the unequal power relations between groups in society, and hence it is racism and not prejudice which needs to be challenged (see for example, Kailin, 1994; Troyna, 1989; 1987). It is not clear if tutors at Rosehall College received any staff development to help them examine with students societal inequalities and racist beliefs. But it would appear from student accounts that tutors were not equipped to deal effectively with individual/group racism. Zita had particular misgivings about the approach adopted by her tutor.

> As far as I was concerned the racism the students expressed shouldn't have gone on for three weeks. The lecturer didn't handle the sessions very well ... she gave them the opportunity to voice what they thought ... and it just carried on with them reiterating what they had already said. Can you imagine three weeks of that? She wasn't strong enough ... she agreed with what I was saying but she wasn't saying it strongly enough. It really got to me because I've had to fight against attitudes like that all my life. My previous experiences

told me that things needed to be sorted out. At the end of the day if people are going to argue with you about things like that they should be told that their views are wrong. But all we got to hear was this barrage of opinion that black children should behave in the way those people would have them behave. I've got two young children in school and they're likely to be taught by teachers with similar views if such views are not challenged. (Zita)

It was also evident that the College did not have mechanisms in place for supporting black students who found themselves in this type of hostile environment.

... it was a sort of 'us' and 'them' situation. There were only two blacks in my group. When you're in the minority you don't often get heard. But I couldn't just sit there and say nothing. I felt pressurized to stand up for my point of view. It was something that had to be addressed. (Bev)

The policy rhetoric states that staff 'should have an increased awareness of racism and its effects upon both minority and majority group members' (Section 2.1). On the basis of these black women's experiences it is evident that such an awareness amongst staff was absent. My conversations with the women during this period found them 'disheartened and deeply distressed' by the tirade of opinion that they had encountered from the white students in their groups, and the lack of tutor support.

I just wanted the sessions to end. I couldn't take anymore. I was totally dismayed by what was said and the fact that my tutor didn't say anything to make them stop. You know there were a couple of people who felt strongly that what the others were saying was wrong, but they never said it in the discussions. They said in the coffee bar where no one else could hear them. (Gita)

According to Ladson-Billings (1991) when white students are presented with a challenge to the status quo and to their own views they react with hostility (see also Avery and Walker, 1993; King, 1991; Cohen, 1989). The fact that these white students reacted negatively does not mean that such issues should not be addressed. If the friction raised by such issues is not discussed by ITE staff the isolation and frustration that black students feel will continue.

We should address these differences and difficulties when we're in college, but we don't. These issues are touched upon, a fuse is lit and then it's just put out again. (Bev)

The black students were fearful of the impact they felt such negative attitudes could have on black children in schools. This anxiety is justified because as Johnson (1994) has shown teachers' beliefs of additional language learners can affect how they teach and promote learning. Zita, was particularly concerned about the effect she felt such views had on her relationship with the students who were so forthright in their opinions.

I can't say that I've got friends in that particular group. I couldn't be friends with people who have such opinions. I think it is unfortunate that they were put into one group. I'm sure it wasn't done because of their opinions on that subject ... but they were all there together. Even though we're in different groups this year it has made things difficult between us. (Zita)

Bev, however, took a more conciliatory approach.

At first I thought I wouldn't have anything to do with them, in fact I was sure that I wouldn't, but since then I have worked with people who hold views which I think are terrible. They're not in themselves bad people. I think if they mix with other black people and go into schools where there is a high black population they may change their views, and work through the process they're at at the moment. (Bev)

Similarly, Tabachnick and Zeichner (1993) argue that students need to spend time in multi-ethnic classrooms and communities if racial prejudice is to be tackled and cultural diversity is not to be seen as problematic (see also Taylor, W., 1993). However, there is no automatic guarantee that the 'contact' hypothesis (Troyna, 1987) and student experience of multi-ethnic schools will help white student teachers to understand their own or pupil racism, if racist perceptions and 'the wider social influences that affect intergroup contact' are not addressed within their ITE courses (Hatcher and Troyna, 1993:111).

If students are not taught to appreciate cultural diversity how can they be expected to teach pupils to do just that? How can pupils be expected to demonstrate tolerance when students are not able to do that themselves? (Rita)

Furthermore, as there did not appear to be any constructive dialogue about cultural diversity in other curriculum areas and the College lacked adequate procedures for dealing with student racism, it is unlikely that students with derogatory opinions would find cause to change them, or see multicultural education as offering an opportunity for individuals to broaden their thinking.

There is no certainty that a wider understanding of cultural diversity will lead to a rejection of stereotypical views (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1992; McDiarmid, 1992; Verma, 1989), or an acceptance of cultures outside one's own. However, there is even less chance of this happening if teacher educators are not enabled through staff development and continuous institutional support, to explore prospective teachers' belief systems, their perceptions about culturally diverse learners, and to address racism. This is considered important, especially as 'knowledge is socially produced, deeply imbued with human interests, and deeply implicated in the unequal social relations outside the school door' (McCarthy, 1993:295). As a final comment, if student racism goes unexplored it could result in black students thinking that the only way to experience ITE positively is to isolate themselves from white students.

Because of what happened in the language diversity sessions I tend to keep quiet in my lessons and I usually go straight

home after my classes just to make sure that I don't get caught up in having to defend being black, or to have to keep highlighting my experiences of the educational system. If you're not careful you can get caught in that trap and that only makes the situation worse because there are so few black students here. In most of my classes I'm usually on my own so I'd rather not have any unnecessary hassles. I'm not saying that if something needs saying that I won't say it, but it's less stressful this way. (Zita)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The equal opportunities policy at Rosehall College expresses the institution's intention to be 'open to all'. Being 'open to all' means that no one should be excluded or prevented from attending the College. One of the main aims of the equal opportunities policy is to combat 'race' and gender discrimination, and to cater for student access and progression while at the College.

> The college will adjust its learning opportunities to the needs and circumstances of its clients... (Section 4, para. 1)

The experiences of the students in the study, however, point to a failure on the part of the College in adhering to its own stated principles. These experiences can be divided into four main categories: gender, cultural identity, the curriculum and racism.

Gender

Two students, Zita and Ella raise important points which reveal the complications faced by women with children.

> They said the course is designed for mature students yet they don't make provisions or allowances for those with children. We start at nine and finish at five. Often it is difficult for women with children to be here on time. It also means that you need to have someone to collect the children after school. Some women cannot afford to pay for a childminder. When you come for your interview, you are not told that on certain days classes finish at five o'clock because they want you to enrol. We used to get half term off like the schools, now we don't. This means that you have to make alternative arrangements. If you're a single parent this is difficult. (Zita)

> Some of the lecturers inferred by their attitude that I had not got my priorities right - having children and then going back to college. Lectures start at nine. I have to take my son to nursery school first, drop my daughter off at school and then get myself to college for nine. ... I asked one of my lecturer's if I could be a little late, and he said: "That's fine". But when I actually turned up two or three minutes late, he said: "You can't come in. You have to go away, you can't just barge into my lesson when you feel like it". He wouldn't listen when I told him that I had already asked for his permission. (Ella)

The women generally had domestic support from their partners. For most however, their responsibilities, as women, to their families took priority over their needs as students. If the children were ill it was the mother who took time off from her studies. This sometimes meant that the women's studies were interrupted or put on hold in times of serious family illness. The entrenchment of gender role ideology ensures that many women find themselves having to juggle domestic and study commitments in order to remain in higher education. Although some women argued that their lives as student and mother were 'indivisible' (Edwards, 1990), they attended to their childcare duties first.

> I always do my work once the children are in bed or before they get up. Never while they are about. For me it has to be like that. (Bernice)

At the beginning of the third year of her degree Olive had to take on the responsibility for looking after her younger sister and her mother, after her mother had been seriously injured by a patient at the hospital where she worked as a nurse. This occurred shortly after the death of her maternal grandmother. This was an extremely traumatic period for Olive. In order to cope with her newly acquired role of carer and her course work, Olive returned to live at home, commuted to College daily and drew on the strength and support provided by her church friends.

> I thought of giving up the B.Ed several times but my friends at church pulled me through. They read my assignments, they encouraged me when an assignment mark was lower than I

had expected and they even told me off when they thought I was slacking off. Sometimes I didn't have the energy or wish to go into college but they were there ready to motivate me. I wouldn't have got through without them, especially during teaching practice. I know I wouldn't because I was so tired, exhausted. (Olive)

Olive felt that while her personal tutor was sympathetic to her dilemma there were no procedures in place at the College that would have enabled her to submit more than the occasional assignment after the due date, and the timing of some of her lectures and seminars meant that she had to miss them completely in order to care for her mother. Olive likened her third year at Rosehall to being a 'visitor, just passing through' but without any of the 'help and/or support' accorded to other visitors who came to the College.

A cursory look into the extent to which family responsibilities impinged on women students' lives shows the extent to which they would need to be incorporated into policy if women students and in particular single parents, are to have equal access into and equal progression through courses.

There are other types of gender inequality that women experience in ITE (see for example, Sikes, 1993) and more generally in higher education (Edwards, 1990). However, the main gender concerns of the women I interviewed related to what they considered to be the impracticalities of some aspects of course provision for parents and women as carers. As primary teacher education courses on the whole are studied by women (DeLyon and Migniuolo, 1989) it is somewhat

surprising that the ITE experiences of women with children and/or other family responsibilities are not given greater attention.

Cultural identity

The equal opportunities policy states that the College's 'commitment to equal opportunities should be immediately visible within the College', for example, in the way that it treats students at enquiry points, the languages used on College notices, how it presents itself to the outside community in terms of the representation of staff and students in publicity material, and the type of events that are promoted within the College. There is no mention of dress, traditional or otherwise in the equal opportunities policy. This is rather unfortunate as the South Asian students went to some lengths to discuss the importance of dress codes as markers of cultural identity. They viewed the attitudes of some of the white students as yet another example of how they were marginalized and bemoaned the neglect of the College in dealing with these concerns.

Most of the South Asian women in this study did not wear traditional dress in or outside College. The two women who contemplated wearing traditional dress at the College refrained for the following reason.

> Gita and I have talked about wearing traditional outfits to college but we will not wear them because we do not want to be ridiculed. I suppose it's our fear of being looked at funnily, stared at, isolated. (Zaria)

They felt that if they dressed contrary to the norm they would be regarded as 'attention seeking'. They were wary that their wearing of traditional clothes on occasional days might be interpreted as making a particular statement when there was no such intention.

> ... if I wore traditional dress on the odd occasion to college it would be like I was attention seeking. I know I would get comments like: What are you wearing? Why are you wearing it? What does that mean? What does this mean? It would just get out of order and take away the purpose of wearing it. It would not be ordinary, it would be seen as special. (Gita)

These feelings were generated by a number of incidents and interactions with white students. Zita stated that her wearing of traditional clothing elicited remarks such as: "You look nice today". She felt that such comments implied that she did not look nice when she wore western attire. The South Asian students were of the view that their traditional clothes were regarded as exotic (Brah, 1992) and that this attracted 'favourable' comments from white students who normally seemed indifferent to them.

The fact that students should have felt uncomfortable about wearing their own traditional clothes points to another area of neglect by the College, namely the failure to bolster and encourage the students' own identities. Although some of the women would have liked to wear traditional dress, they were more concerned to ensure that that they did not confirm white students' stereotypical notions of them as 'other'. They did not want to attract attention to themselves or unfavourable comments about their cultural identities and were

therefore in the contradictory position of having to pander to these stereotypes. As Gita explains,

> I am Asian and yes I am different in that sense but I don't want to have to explain why I don't dress like western women. So it's easier to dress like them. You know that some of them don't like Asian people, so why give them something to talk about? If I did wear Asian dress I would spend so much time thinking about how my appearance would be interpreted that it wouldn't be worth wearing it. It would just cause me too much hassle and I really don't want that. (Gita)

In chapter two I discussed some of the cultural factors which aimed to govern the appearance and behaviour of South Asian women outside the home. As a Muslim woman, Zaria was not allowed to reveal her legs to men in public. As a result of this particular restriction, she found physical educational activities like swimming especially difficult. During her first year at the College Zaria discovered that she had been allocated to a swimming group which had three men in it. She describes how she felt below.

> I was upset when I found out that the group I had been allocated to had three men in it. I was more than upset, I was angry. I had to ask my tutor if I could change and go into a women's only group. I was scared of being with men because I would have to wear a swimming costume and I don't like showing my legs in front of men. I never have, not even at home. It is against Islam. My tutor changed my group after I explained the situation to him but that problem should never

have arisen because I told them (college) I was a Muslim when I came for my interview and I told my personal tutor at the beginning of the year. But I don't think they were interested in what that actually means. (Zaria)

Zaria shows that whatever the good intentions of the College in relation to the equal opportunities policy, the policy rhetoric fell short of incorporating diversity as an issue to be addressed. Despite declared welcome to all students to join the College, ethnocentricism remained the norm.

The curriculum

The College's policy states that equal opportunities will have high profile on the agenda and be evident to the local and college community. The curriculum will also reflect both the needs and aspirations of the college community and embrace a broad range of experiences. In the following pages I will focus specifically on 'race' because it was the equality issue which the black women student teachers felt most affected their experience of the curriculum.

It was suggested by the black students that when 'race' was discussed it was not explored in any detail or any indication given as to staff commitment to it.

When it came to race it was: "Don't touch this", or "Deal with it quickly, pleasantly and be tactful". Where race was concerned it was like walking on egg shells. It was dealt with very superficially and swept under the carpet almost immediately it

was raised. It was so funny and amusing to watch because while the lecturer was telling you that they believed in addressing such issues their actions suggested otherwise. It was like: "We've dealt with this issue now let's go onto something else". (Olive)

There are two immediate explanations that could be put forward for Olive's experience of 'race' in the curriculum. Firstly, 'race' is a contentious issue which requires sensitivity and an in-depth understanding if it is to be explored in detail, and the relevant issues are to be drawn out in the discussion. Rather than being apathetic, Olive's tutor may have been trying to demonstrate to students just how sensitive they would need to be if they were to explore arguments of 'race' adequately with pupils. Alternatively, whilst sensitivity to 'race' is essential for teaching in a multiracial society, it would seem that the avoidance of 'certain areas' for the sake of sensitivity masked the feelings of inadequacy this tutor may have felt about teaching the topic. Secondly, in the current climate of underfunding staff may have lacked access to the resources and the training that would have enabled them to examine 'race' at length. Over the years the government has consistently reduced its funding to higher education institutions (HEIs). This has resulted in course managers/directors prioritising course needs and competing for funding on the basis of those needs within their individual institutions. In view of this, and the low status accorded to equal opportunities issues by central government (see below), it is likely that if course managers at the College had to make a choice between applying for funding for educational and professional courses for students, and equal opportunities training for staff, they would have

applied for monies to fund their courses. A lack of training and staff development would undoubtedly have accounted for the superficial treatment of 'race' these black students experienced.

> They say they don't know enough about race ... theirs is simply an attitude of: "I do not know enough or anything about it". So it is touched on briefly or not at all. (Muna)

It would also have contributed to staff being wary about their ability to address an issue in which they lacked expert or adequate knowledge.

> When the topic is race they (lecturer's) look at you expecting you to come up with something that will help them out. It's as if you're supposed to do the lecture for them. I don't like that. We had two equal opps lectures, one in the second and the other in the third year. On both occasions the same lecturer looked to me for support and confirmation of what she had said. As I listened to what was being said on race the lecturer smiled at me. I smiled back at her, then she said: "You're keeping very quiet Chloe. Do you want to add anything?" They want you to say something because they don't have anything to say. If she's doing an equal opps lecture she should just do it. I don't know if she was trying to make a statement or if she was looking to me to save her life. (Chloe)

Chloe's comments indicate that she believed that her tutor wanted black students to contribute to discussions on 'race' because she 'did not have anything to say' herself. However, Grugeon and Woods

argue that individuals tend to 'talk on the basis of their own experience' (1990:212). Following on from this, it could be argued that as issues of 'race' and racism did not form part of the tutor's experience she found it necessary to seek support from the black students in her class.

In looking at language in the curriculum I pointed out that the DES (1989) had been in favour of student teachers learning about equal opportunities issues in order that they could promote them in their teaching. Towards the end of the 1980's, however, government support for equal opportunities was on the decline. In 1987 the then Secretary of State for Education, Kenneth Baker, declared that 'the pursuit of egalitarianism is over' (quoted by Klein, 1994:170). It was argued instead that individual equality could be gained through free competition and the operation of the market in education (Apple, 1993). In 1992 educationalists were left in no doubt as to the government's position on equality issues. The Prime Minister, John Major, stated that 'teachers should learn to teach children how to read, not waste their time on the politics of gender, race and class' (quoted by Siraj-Blatchford and Troyna, 1993:223). The idea that equality issues are less important, if not irrelevant, to pupils' learning (see also Bousted et al., 1994) has resulted in such issues not being prioritised (McNamara, 1992) or even mentioned in official criteria for teacher education (DFE, 1992, 1993: Crozier and Menter, 1993). The 1993 Education Act has also undermined the status and significance of 'race' in education. The lack of priority given to equal opportunities issues by central government has resulted in the demise of courses, for example, sociology of education, which traditionally examined equality issues with student teachers (see

Siraj-Blatchford 1995; Reid, 1993). According to Siraj-Blatchford (1993c) the course content that has to be covered by B.Ed and PGCE students, in order that they will be able to 'deliver' the National Curriculum in schools, makes it difficult for equality issues to be given detailed attention by teacher educators. Students are required to spend at least half of their course time on their subject specialism, and a quarter of that time on pedagogy (DES, Circular 3/84). Siraj-Blatchford (1993c:90) raises a very important question: 'If students have less time to reflect on issues of 'race', gender and class, who are they prepared to teach?

Given the time constraints and the need to cover a broad curriculum it is possible that staff at the College may have viewed their limited treatment of 'race' as the only way of ensuring that this important issue was at least highlighted, if not discussed in detail. As this study set out to examine the life history experiences of black women in ITE I did not interview any staff members to establish their views about the courses they taught, or their motives for examining 'race' in the way that they did. Therefore I am unable to confirm whether staff were apathetic or merely constrained by institutional deficiencies and government policies. I can, however, point out that the approach adopted by tutors gave black students the impression that they were not interested in 'race' equality. One effect of this was to discourage some black students from contributing to seminars on 'race' or exploring 'race' in detail themselves. The women were annoyed at what they perceived to be a common assumption amongst staff and white students, that black students because of their skin colour were likely to be knowledgeable about 'race'.

> I didn't cover race because they expected us to. I felt they had stereotyped us as able to do it because we are black. (Naomi)

This assumption created difficulties for black students, especially when there was only one black student in the class or subject group, as they felt pressurized into fulfilling the 'professional ethnic' role. Olive expresses her frustrations.

> We are always the ones who are asked about race. If you're the only black student in the class when the lecturer asks a question the lecturer and the students will all look at you as if to say, are you going to say something, and I think, why don't you say something. I'm quite happy to sit down and let someone else tell me about race because they need to learn about it too. But no-one wants to ... race isn't just a black thing, white people have a racial identity as well. I don't see why white students can't look at race or why the lecturer doesn't talk to all of us about race. I don't have all the answers. In fact I want to know more about it myself. (Olive)

'Race is a social, historical and variable category' (McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993:XV) to which different interpretations and meanings can be applied (see for example, Roman, 1993; West, 1993). What Olive makes clear is that being black does not mean that one understands or is able to articulate all of the issues around 'race'. It is evident that Right-wing influences within the government regard equality issues as 'theoretical nonsense which undermine standards in schools and distracts from the real purpose of education' (Blair and Bourdillon, forthcoming; see also Gilroy, 1992). However, from

student accounts it would seem that an engagement with so-called 'theoretical nonsense' in ITE is necessary if student teachers (black and white) and teacher educators are to be enabled to comprehend fully the complexities of 'race', how power works through discourses of 'race' (Hall, 1992) and how 'race' affects the experience of schooling for pupils (see chapters two and six). The teaching of science, for example, is generally considered a neutral, objective activity. But as Thorp says,

> 'science' has played, and plays still, a major role in forming racist viewpoints and in maintaining social, economic and political power, globally, in the hands of a white male elite. Far from being marginal to antiracist multicultural education, science has a centrality, stemming from its history, practices and applications, which has implications for the achievement and racial identity of black students, and the viewpoints and actions of white students... (Thorp, 1992:16).

Ashrif, states that 'school is about educating young people, so they understand better how the real world works' (1992:13). But Gillborn (1995) has pointed out that this is not happening in schools with regard to the teaching of mathematics and science.

> As they are currently taught ... mathematics and the natural sciences often present very particular notions of 'rationality' and 'progress'. Black, Asian and other 'non-Western' influences and achievements are typically swamped amid Eurocentric representations that unthinkingly reproduce familiar stereotypes, such as Western (white) technology

> coming to the aid of impoverished and underdeveloped non-Western (Black/Asian/other) nations (Gillborn, 1995:131-132).

If, therefore, student teachers who are science specialists, for example, have no knowledge of or understanding of 'race' and the significance of 'race' in the development of racist scientific theories, how can they be expected to impart information which will generate a wider understanding amongst pupils and produce less racist ideas? This point applies to all teachers and not just to those who teach science.

McCarthy and Crichlow (1993) argue that when 'race' is being studied it should also include an examination of how 'white' racial identity has, and continues to be politically and socially constructed, and the meanings applied to such an identity (see also Roman, 1993; Omi and Winant, 1993). For West (1993) the binary opposites of 'blackness' and 'whiteness' also need to be at the centre of the discussion. This would help to widen the debate about the problematic nature of 'race', and how and why images of 'blackness' and 'whiteness' are constructed. It is argued that an exploration of these factors would provide students with an understanding of,

> the historical and contemporary variability of race and the crucial roles of gender, class, sexuality, and nation in the process of racial identity formation and structuration (McCarthy and Critchlow, 1993:XVI).

It would also help student teachers and indeed teacher educators to learn as Olive suggests that, "race' is not just a black thing', and that 'race' knowledge can be provided by both black and white teachers.

Staff who had been given responsibility for equal opportunities at Rosehall generally kept a low profile. As a result the black students were unaware of the existence of designated equal opportunities staff.

> I'm leaving and I didn't even know that there was an equal opps officer in college. I only found out via the co-ordinator of Section 11 in the county. I've been here four years and assumed there was nobody to help me, that is to talk about the kinds of problems I've had, or things that I've come across. That kind of information for student welfare is not available. (Sita)

It is not known why equal opportunities staff were not more prominent in the College, but Sita's comments help to illustrate the importance of such staff for some students, and the role she would have liked them to play in her professional development. Klein (1994) doubts whether student teachers today are interested in issues of equality. It might be argued that one of the reasons the black students in this research were so concerned about the low status of equal opportunity personnel, and about staff attitude towards 'race' is because as a group black people (and in particular black women) occupy lower status and employment positions in Britain (Jury, 1994; Brown, 1984). Inevitably, living in a society

which is divided by 'race', class and gender will ensure that black women's interests in equality issues continue.

Racism

a) *staff racism*

Rattansi (1992) has argued that there is a culture of teacher racism in schools which affects both black pupils and black teachers. This is not surprising as it is a culture which permeates the very institutions which produce teachers.

> One lecturer made the comment that Asian people smell - "They've got some funny characteristic smell about them". She was actually talking to me at the time. (Muna)

> We were talking about infant school maths and different ways of presenting maths to infant children ... and the lecturer said: "If they don't understand a particular thing you call them a 'silly nig nog'". She looked at me, then the group and said: "I'm not meant to use that word am I? You just call them a silly idiot", and laughed it off. How does that make me feel, if I'm not a 'silly nig nog', I'm a 'silly idiot'? (Marsha)

> Before I went into school for my first teaching practice I asked my tutor about some of the things that I should look out for. He said there was only one thing - 'loud and aggressive' black children. He said it was a 'distinctive Caribbean problem'. So I said to him: "I'm from the Caribbean and if

> black children are a 'distinctive problem' what does that make me?" He didn't answer. (Naomi)

Teacher educators are at the forefront of educating students to become 'good' teachers, but if their own practice is not exemplary, and students are not sensitized to the effects of racism in education, student teachers may inadvertently disadvantage their pupils. Gillborn (1990) has drawn attention to the myth of African-Caribbean pupils as presenting a distinctive challenge to authority in schools (see also Evans, 1988). He argues that teachers expectations of such pupils as being a disciplinary problem are rooted in historical racist ideologies which identified black people as being 'naturally' aggressive and violent. Without an analysis of racist beliefs and the various effects of racism, examples of bad practice will go unquestioned. Clearly the best way to ensure that students are able to challenge racism is to discuss the issues positively in each of the subject areas.

Another, but different example, of teacher racism is recounted by Olive.

> I put my hand up and said: "I'm having some problems with my timing". The music tutor said to me: "I'm surprised someone of your background has problems with timing". We were doing our music profile tasks and I chose to play a hymn. After I had finished she said: "You played that with some Caribbean rhythm". I thought well that's saying something I have got no timing but I have got Caribbean rhythm. (Olive)

Although it might be argued that music, singing and dancing are central to many people's lives, it is a myth that all black people are particularly musical (Walvin, 1982). Black people's supposed 'natural rhythm' is not a genetic fact. Walvin suggests that 'Negroes (sic) were fitted into a stereotyped role earmarked for them by white society' (1982:68). For example, they were said to have an aptitude for and love of music which made them 'naturally' suited to becoming musicians, whilst their supposed agility was used to steer them into sport and away from academic careers (Carrington, 1983). It is worth pointing out (as the equal opportunities policy makes clear) that the stereotyping of students by staff can lead to inappropriate expectations and performance.

On another occasion Olive's music tutor asked her, if she and her black friends were having a 'multicultural jamboree', when she saw them sitting together in the refectory. The tutor may have been unaware that her remarks caused offence, but they do confirm the limited impact of the College's equal opportunities policy. They would also seem to support Gillborn's contention that 'teachers who are not 'prejudiced' in any ... sense, nevertheless act in ways that have racist consequences (1995:172). Olive's experience points to the need for researchers to examine further how black students interpret the actions and attitudes of staff, and how taken for granted assumptions about black people are sometimes incorporated into their teaching by staff.

b) *student racism*

Many of the students live in College halls of residence which have single and shared rooms. It is often difficult for anyone to share with someone who is unknown to them, but the anxiety is usually greater when black and white students who do not know each other share accommodation, especially if neither party has shared with someone of a different ethnicity before. Yula describes the effect that her skin colour had.

> In the first year I shared lodgings with a girl who had obviously never mixed with black people before. Whenever she came into the room and I was there she went all tense. I sensed she was afraid and probably thought I was going to attack her. When I first met her father he asked me all sorts of questions. He was trying to do all the pleasantries but I could see through it. He asked me what kind of education I'd had and when he said: "Where do you live?" I knew what was coming next, what area? So I said: "St. Paul's", which everyone knows is notorious for the riots which occurred there in 1981. He said: "Oh, oh!" I said: "Yes a very rough area". My room-mate told the girl in the room next door that her father had told her that she had better watch me. (Yula)

The uneasiness that Yula's room-mate felt was presumably increased by the sensationalised media coverage of the inner-city uprisings in 1981. The information which circulated at the time about black communities in those areas and black people in general, was frightening and negative (Gilroy, 1982). African-Caribbean's in

particular were stereotyped as being aggressive. As a result Yula's identity aroused deep anxieties within her room-mate.

The expression of hurt on Yula's face as she exposed her inner feelings, told its own story. She too was afraid. Afraid of living and studying in an environment where she was 'guilty' of violating the 'sanctity of white existence' (Yula). Yula's experiences of rejection by the white students in her year led her to avoid public situations in which she felt vulnerable, such as the refectory and student lounges. She even went as far as walking around College buildings rather than through them to avoid being glared at or ignored.

> I suppose I just became so oppressed by their rejection that I didn't know what to do except to try and avoid it. No-one would talk to me. When I tried to talk to them they just ignored me. I was not allowed access into their conversations, not even in group work when we were supposed to work together. I'm very quiet and I don't always voice my opinions. I found their rejection difficult to deal with. I think that's why I went into my shell. It's like you're taking a beating and you become so scared that you lose your confidence and you can't retaliate. I was stripped of every ounce of confidence that I had. If I had to walk through the library or anywhere where there were lots of white people I had to psyche myself up to face that situation because I knew no-one was going to talk to me. I had to take a deep breath before I entered. I suppose it was harder for me because there were no other black people in my specialism group or in any of my other lessons.

The sense of isolation that Yula felt contributed to her poor academic performance and resulted in Yula not having a social life at Rosehall. Emotionally she felt 'drained'. By the end of her first year Yula's self esteem was at its lowest ebb. In an attempt to deal with white rejection Yula sought refuge (during the second year) with a black family and greater social acceptance in predominantly black groups outside College. She joined an all black netball team and spent most of her spare time working on a variety of projects within the black community with 'confident black women who were strong in their racial identity'. It is evident as Anderson (1988) suggests that ostracism by white students can lead to black students forming and assembling in their own social groups.

> I think the environment here forces black people to keep themselves together as a group. On the PGCE there are five black students, can you imagine how lonely I would have been if I had been the only one? (Meleta)

However, this kind of separation is not advantageous to achieving greater student integration.

When Yula re-emerged in the third year the confidence she had acquired about being black operated against her.

> Being with my black friends outside college just gave me the strength, the courage and ability to survive at college. They taught me not to feel intimidated or threatened by groups of white people. But I was surprised when one of the students in my specialism group told me I had a chip on my shoulder. She

said it was because I was always talking about what it is to be black. I said to her: "Well in case it had escaped your attention I am black. That's all I know, really to talk about anything else I'd probably only be speaking hypothetically". "But we don't see you as anything else, you're like us." I said: "Angel I'm not". "Yes you are, you're just like us." ... I assumed that she was saying that because I don't act as if I'm white my actions indicate to everyone that I'm black. This annoys them because I'm supposed to conform. "You're supposed to be like us, you're just like us. We don't see you as anything else, yet you're always addressing your difference." That's when I started to cry. I realised for the first time that everything I did was contrary to how they wanted me to behave. I had gone out of my way to be nice to them. I had wanted to give the impression that they could feel comfortable around black people. But I failed. I just wanted to be accepted as me but that wasn't good enough for them. At times it feels like I'm fighting a losing battle because I am in a minority and because of the fact that I want to keep hold of identity. (Yula)

Gillborn's study (1990) of black pupils' experiences of secondary schooling revealed that whenever African-Caribbean pupils expressed 'their sense of blackness' they were criticised by their white teachers. When Yula talked about how she saw herself, her black identity, she was criticised by her white peers. She also found that emphasising her blackness had the same effect as her shyness. She remained ostracised. It is possible to interpret the reaction of the white students as their attempt to prove to Yula that they saw her as

being 'like them' - just another student. However, as Yula herself explains,

> white students say they want you to be just like them, but you cannot be just like them because there are differences in our experiences. Although we're all women together and experiencing the world at the same time our experiences are not the same. (Yula)

Yula's experience with these white students illustrates that racism imposes a 'no-win' situation on black students. Yula blamed herself for not 'trying hard enough initially to gain acceptance' amongst the students. It was not until the end of the third year that she realised that she was being discriminated against, and that she was not entirely responsible for her marginalization. But even then she was unable to display a confident outward self. As she approached the fourth year the positiveness and strength she gained from 'being black' in her second year retreated inwards. It was evident from Yula's anguished reflections that she intended on completion of her B.Ed degree to seek employment in mainly black schools. As she said,

> at least no-one will question who I am, or why I am black, or what it means to be black. They will already know and understand.

Arguably, Yula's isolation at Rosehall was to a certain extent, self inflicted. Nevertheless, by not tackling questions of racism and prejudice with students, the College failed to provide a positive

learning environment in which black students could feel a sense of belonging.

Other students highlighted aspects of student racism which caused them to question their acceptance by white students and to seek accommodation outside College. The following example is typical of the experience of the black students who had resided in the College's residences.

> In the second year I was living in one of the student halls I went into the bathroom and I heard one of the girls say: "I bet she needs to scrub herself with a brillo pad to get herself clean". I thought to myself how do I react to this as I was really angry. I had my bath, came out and coolly said: "Oh by the way I don't need a scrubbing brush to clean myself with", and walked downstairs. Then she came downstairs and said: "Oh Marsha you know I didn't mean anything by that remark". ... White students might see you cooking something rather simple and they go: "Uhh! What's that?" You might be cooking roast chicken and rice and they still think it's wierd. Everything is rather unusual to them, even your hair care. "Do you wash your hair the same way we do?" (Marsha)

Marsha's experience highlights a more widespread problem of racism in student accommodation (see for example, Siraj-Blatchford, 1991).

It is possible that with greater understanding amongst black and white students of similarities and 'differences' and the effects of

racism and prejudice, Yula and other students like her, might have had a more positive experience at the College.

> I can't say anything about college that has been enjoyable. I just tolerated it because I needed to get my degree. I think that's how most of the black students viewed their time here. In the first year I went home nearly every weekend ... I needed to keep hold of my identity. I had to go home to be reassured by my friends that I wasn't 'square' as the white students said. I went home to convince myself that I was human. Some of the students are very, very racist. In the second year I made a conscious effort to go home less and try to survive as best as I could but it was so difficult. .... Being able to go home and be with my friends and family has helped me to cope here. If I didn't have them to talk to about my experiences here I would have been very lost. (Chloe)

c) *'colour blindness'*

'Colour blindness' is 'based on ethnocentric assumptions about what this treatment should be like' (Halstead, 1988, cited by Leicester, 1993:20). Cochran-Smith and Lytle have suggested that teachers believe that 'educational equity requires teachers to be colour-blind in their classrooms' (1992:108; see also Leicester, 1993). At Rosehall certain members of staff have adopted a 'colour blind' attitude in their teaching. 'Colour blindness' is expressed in different ways. For example,

With lecturers if you put your hand up in response to a question, they look past you to another student. If that person has their hand up they will ask that person. If the answer is unsatisfactory they will ask somebody else. They try to cut you out. They ignore you because they probably don't think you have got the right answer. (Olive)

It is noticeable that Olive tries to explain the 'blindness' of tutors to her raised hand, by suggesting that black students are ignored because of a belief that their answers will be incorrect. She does not perceive the lecturer's action as being deliberately racist. It might be argued that there is no deliberate intention to ignore the black student, and that white students are equally passed over in search of the right answer. So in that respect the lecturer is being selective rather than racist. But, what Olive describes is a pattern of behaviour which she interpreted as being underpinned by colour prejudice. If the colour of a student was of no consequence, then it seems safe to assume that on at least one occasion Olive would have been picked to respond to the question. It would also demonstrate fair practice on the part of the tutor. Such incidents, if viewed in the context of other negative experiences of black students in the College, serves to highlight the salience of 'colour' in the interactions between black and white people in the College.

Being 'colour blind' has an element of convenience attached to it. Staff are both 'colour blind' and 'colour conscious' as and when the need arises. On the one hand black students can be ignored as demonstrated by Olive. On the other, black students are called upon to

provide insights into what it is like to be 'black' when the subject matter is deemed to be multicultural.

> In one of my junior studies lectures we were talking about understanding maths concepts using bi-lingualism. The lecturer asked me to say something in 'Indian' to the group. The idea was to try and explain a concept so that they would all understand it, although they would not be able to reply since none of them could speak my language. That's the first time in three years that my first language has entered teaching. I was really surprised. Afterwards the lecturer explained that she had asked me to do it so that other students would realise that there could be a barrier to some children understanding maths. I do not think the language itself was being valued. It was just being used to illustrate a point. (Gita)

The use of different languages to convey the lecturer's point about the difficulties in understanding maths concepts is good. However, the fact that the lecturer asked Gita to say something in 'Indian' illustrates her ignorance of the number of Indian languages that are spoken. It is possible that the lecturer realised the learning opportunity Gita's bi-lingualism could present to the rest of the group. But the institutional lack of value for language diversity is clear to the student who notes that it was the first time that she had been asked to share aspects of her first language. Although the intention may not have been to devalue Gita's mother tongue, by drawing Gita into the discussion because of her skin colour the lecturer's approach had that effect. This type of recognition conveys to black student teachers that as 'professional ethnics' they are

acceptable, but as individuals with a point of view - outside of the 'ethnic' context - their contribution is ignored. Needless to say, such selective recognition did little to convince black students that they were accepted as equals.

Although it might seem from the above that tutors are being placed in a no-win situation (that is, they are criticised for being 'colour conscious' as well as being 'colour blind') this is not the intention. I am merely trying to point out that colour is a complex issue which needs to be addressed. By ignoring or only highlighting colour in certain instances tutors inhibit equality of educational opportunity because people's subjective experiences and societal positions are differentiated by colour. Furthermore as Brah and Minhas (1988:218) argue 'denying pupils their racial/cultural identities is just one way in which racism is made manifest' and societal inequalities are sustained.

In her study of a group of white American teachers Sleeter (1993) found that many had preconceived notions about 'people of color' (in particular, African Americans and Latinos). As a result of the negative views they held several of the teachers tried to adopt a 'colour blind' attitude in their teaching. They wanted to treat children equally and not be racist themselves. This led Sleeter to argue that teachers 'profess to be color-blind when trying to suppress negative images they attach to people of color' (ibid:161). It is not being suggested here that Rosehall staff had negative views about black people or the black students they taught, but their 'colour blind' attitude may have had the effect of communicating to

white students that it was alright for them to adopt a similar attitude towards black students and black pupils in schools.

> Something I thought about recently but I didn't respond to at the time was: "Well I don't see you as Asian I just see you as Muna". I thought it's an odd thing to say, but I put it aside and didn't think about it. But when I thought about it, I thought what a stupid thing to say. How can you not see me as Asian? If you don't see me as Asian you are ignoring an essential part that is right in front of you. (Muna)

So it is reasonable to conclude that if these attitudes are not explored and understood, students will continue to believe that being 'colour blind' is an appropriate way to encourage tolerance and acceptability.

'Colour blindness' can be easily dismissed with the argument that individuals really do not see colour in people, or by accepting that colour is not a factor in the decisions they make. But the importance of skin colour in white constructions of acceptability is usually very clear to those who are rejected.

> Sometimes the way I am treated is demoralising and humiliating. For example, things like getting into pairs and you're the only one left. Or when you have to hold someone's hand and they do not want to hold your hand. It is the feeling that when you walk into the class they are all going to be sitting there and knowing that everyone is going to stare at you. It is knowing that not one person is going to say to me:

"Come and sit down", or treat me as if I have got any feelings. (Yula)

The above excerpt demonstrates the salience of skin colour in specific experiences of black people. The black women student teachers at Rosehall College indicated that skin colour was not a taboo subject for them, neither was it something for them to be apologetic about. They preferred to raise awarenesses by discussing it rather than have the subject side-stepped or swept under the carpet. Some of the black students demonstrated through the medium of theatre their solidarity and the lengths they were prepared to go to, in order to get their voices heard.

Last year we did a play for drama ... it was about our experiences at college. We felt there was a lot of racism. For example, you would go into the classroom and everybody would come and sit down away from us, like in a semi-circle. We would sit down and there would be two chairs on either side. The students (white) would miss a chair and sit on the third chair. If someone came in late they would prefer to pull up a chair rather than sit on either side of the black students. We acted that scene out. The play reflected being black and being treated negatively. We depicted actual scenes that had taken place, like the situation when you go into the toilets and you have to queue up to use the toilet. You go in, come out and nobody else wants to use the toilet after you. Things like that and there was one guy who physically bumped into an Asian woman when there was enough room for him to pass. We all wore masks within the play to show how black students

are rejected and at the end of the play one of the girls read the letter you get from college - *'We are pleased to accept you for this particular course. We are sure that you will enjoy it. We have a multicultural policy!'* (student emphasis - Olive)

Although the students who witnessed the play were moved by the performance and stunned by the revelations of racism, there was still a feeling that the impact was peripheral. There was a consensus amongst the black students that there was a need to focus on issues concerning 'race', racism, cultural and ethnic differences and similarities with a wider audience if the staff and student community was to become enlightened. But they were wary as to the extent to which it is possible to generate, at least, a modicum of awareness, when it is obvious that some people have difficulty understanding cultural differences. Gita provided one example.

> "Are you going to have an arranged marriage?" You tell them no once and then so many times. Then they ask: "What religion are you?" And you tell them: "Hindu". "Oh what language do you speak?" "Gujerati." The next day they will come back and say: "Oh you speak Hindu". You tell them but they 'forget' so quickly. (Gita)

The concept of a multiracial college implies that students would be accorded equal status and respect for their culture and customs. Yet the naivety displayed by white students to 'racial' and cultural differences amongst black people, highlights the absence of a constructive strategy within Rosehall as to how cultural differences can be understood and cultural stereotypes addressed. Without a

positive demonstration in the College that such issues are important, it seems likely that a climate of distrust and 'racial' division will prevail. One student, for example, suggested that one of the main reasons white people are happy to be 'colour blind' is because:

> ... when it comes down to it they don't really want to know us or accept us as people. (Marsha)

CONCLUSION

Through exploring the multicultural educational provision at Rosehall College I have found that the institutional policy fell far short of achieving its aims. The explanation for this can be found in a) social understandings of 'race' and culture, b) government policies, c) institutional ineptness and d) individual racism. The 1988 Education Act and the change in government attitude which led to a lack of support being given to the implementation of multicultural and equal opportunities policies in schools and HEIs, did not make it easier for institutions such as Rosehall to foster a positive multicultural, multiracial environment. Nevertheless, it is clear that multicultural and equal opportunities policies cannot achieve their stated aims if they are implemented without due care and attention being paid to the complexities of 'race', racism and culture, or without an understanding of how the dominant majority will react to policies which attempt to challenge their own understandings of 'race'. The extent of different forms of racisms at the College demonstrates that multicultural education policies by themselves are insufficient to challenge racial inequality. This is probably due to the fact that multicultural education seeks to combat prejudice

rather than racism. This would seem to support the argument that antiracist practice should be part of the 'normal expectations of good teaching and learning' (Turner and Turner, 1992:22).

It is evident that the College failed to recognize that although Britain is a multiracial society, not everyone supports cultural diversity. This points to the need for the institution, tutors and students to move beyond rhetorical policy statements, and work together in practical ways to construct an atmosphere which is conducive to supporting diversity, and a curriculum which is relevant and meaningful to everyone concerned. This research also indicates that student teachers would need to be enabled to work towards educating all pupils and not just those they think they are likely to teach. In addition, staff would need to be provided with INSET courses and continuous institutional support to enable them to address student, as well as their own concerns about diversity, and prepare student teachers for working in the society at large. If pupils' opportunities to learn are not to be restricted by the negative views of teachers, students would need to be provided with the necessary skills to reflect upon their own ideological positions, to challenge the ways in which knowledge is produced and to examine how their own actions could disadvantage pupils. If student teachers were enabled to reflect on their own social position they might be able to comprehend how power relations operate to maintain those positions, and possibly blind them to the inequality experienced by others.

This research further indicates that if equal opportunities and notions of equal rights (see for example, Scraton, 1995; Bousted et al.,

1994; Davies, 1994; Klein, 1994; Osler, 1994) are not viewed as a central concern in teacher education, the professional development of teachers and their ability to challenge societal inequalities and facilitate pupil learning will be hindered. An understanding of societal oppressions is a prerequisite if students and teacher educators are to challenge inequalities in their teaching. Before this can be achieved there is a need for a fuller understanding of all the issues involved in providing and attaining equal opportunities and equal rights in teaching.

Gillborn (1995) noted that antiracist policies worked best in schools where pupils and staff had been involved in the formulation, continued development and implementation of such policies. It could be argued that if multicultural and equal opportunites policies are to be seen to benefit all those who associate with the College (and not just black students), the concerns of everyone involved (including those of staff and women with children) would need to be taken into consideration so that they were able to feel a sense of ownership of the policies (Bagley, 1992); and students could be supported in their learning.

Evans states that 'the presence of black faces does not change the essential nature of an institution, nor does it alter its ethos' (1988:185). The same can be said of paper policies which are not accompanied by action and monitoring. The overall experience of these black women students demonstrates that the College has not yet developed a formula which would enable the aims of multiculturalism and equal opportunities to be at the forefront of staff and student concerns and for black students there to feel an

integral part of the College community. It is clear that there is some way to go before the fine words that are contained within policy documents become reality and actually equip student teachers with the necessary skills to challenge inequalities, and for the ethos and culture of the College to be transformed. Despite the good intentions underpinning the multicultural and equal opportunities policies at Rosehall, these are some of the damning statements made by black students regarding their experiences there.

> I want to go, let me out please, open the door and let me out. That's how I feel about college after my four years. My experiences as a black person should have been better, especially as I was with a group of educated people who should have been very open minded and very understanding. I should have been able to fit in like any piece in a jigsaw puzzle, in any place. You know just get on with the routine of studying and not feel that I am not being accepted into a particular group because I am black ... I remember saying to you that I would not encourage any of my friends to come here and you asked me how it would improve if people weren't encouraged to come here. I agree it will not improve. The foundation needs to be prepared and they do not seem to be preparing it. There is no point putting bricks on a foundation that is not suitable because it is just going to fall down. (Olive)

> It has been a shock ... it has been valuable, it has taught me a lot. People's attitudes do not change, not really. They might seem to when they make grunts in the right direction but that is it, and grunts is all they remain. There should be an interest

in multicultural issues, the debate and the whole scene behind it. But there is not enough movement or power behind wanting to look at the course to make it relevant to the different students that attend here. You would like to share your culture positively with others but the white students do not want to hear about it. You would like to talk about your culture without there being the expectation that that's what black students are here for. You would like to talk about your experiences as a black person in a white college. But you just get on with your life because you feel powerless to change anything, and you do not want to get brow beaten into thinking, I tried it once and it did not work I am never going to do it again. Do you know what I mean? That's how I feel about being at Rosehall. (Sita)

I'm in my fourth year now and I only found out last week that college has a multicultural policy. It's in the library. In the statement it says that we should be made aware of multiculturalism but nobody has made me aware of it.... It just angers me that nothing has been done about multicultural education. Even though they've got a policy, staff ignore it. (Yasmin)

In the following chapter I examine how teaching practice placement schools are chosen for black students. I discuss black students experience of teaching practice and the role of school and college supervisors during teaching practice.

CHAPTER 4

ISSUES AND CONCERNS AROUND TEACHING PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

INTRODUCTION

In recent years central government have introduced a series of reforms into ITE. These reforms are in accordance with Conservative and in particular 'New Right' thinking about how teachers should be trained, the specific aims and purpose of teacher training, the costs to the providers of such training and the role(s) each provider should play (DFE, Circulars 9/92 and 14/93). These reforms mark the beginning of a new era whereby schools (and not higher education institutions) will have the major responsibility for the training and educating of teachers, and where the emphasis in ITE will be on practice, rather than theory (for specific details of what is involved in school-based teacher education see for example, McCulloch, 1993; Sidgwick et al., 1993). The shift from theory to practice, has been interpreted by some as 'evidence' of the government's longterm intention to greatly reduce the role (and power) of teacher educators, and their ideological influence in the training and educating of teachers (Hill, 1992; Menter, 1992; Whitty, 1991). In the words of one commentator, teacher training is no longer,

> training for a whole career, but more the creation of a competent beginner who should be provided with continuing professional development, which will focus on progression in, and the advanced mastery of, competences (a set of specific

practical skills) or the acquisition of new competences appropriate to the later stages of a professional career (Hargreaves, D. 1994:430).

The move towards competency-based models of learning and assessment in schools with specified teaching 'outcomes', together with changes in funding arrangements for ITE, is also seen as part of the government's wider attempt to standardize teacher training and to introduce market ideals into ITE (Sidgwick et al., 1994; Miles and Middleton, 1993). The changes in ITE would seem to be following a pattern similar to that introduced into schools via the 1988 Educational Reform Act and the National Curriculum. By standardizing (and centralizing) teacher training and focusing on teaching 'outcomes', the government aim to improve what are considered to be poor standards of teaching and learning in British schools (McNamara, 1992). As yet, it is unclear as to how more time spent in the classroom will 'make better teachers' (Edwards, 1992), but the raising of teaching standards are considered essential if pupils are to be enabled to improve their educational performance 'to meet the needs of the economy and of industry' (Miles and Middleton, 1995:124). This in turn will help Britain to become more competitive with other countries and advance her economic position globally (Hargreaves, D., 1994). Miles and Middleton (1995) suggest that for the government, teachers and LEA's are the 'inhibiting forces from which schools must be freed if they are to be responsive to consumer demand', that is parents and employers (ibid:124). Arguably, higher education institutions (HEIs) and teacher educators are viewed similarly by the government.

As a result of the reforms of ITE partnership links are being developed between HEIs and schools (see for example, Sidgwick et al., 1993). In some instances these links are tenuous and leave room for 'more explicit negotiation of roles and responsibilities' (Hargreaves, D., 1994:424; see also Blair and Bourdillon, forthcoming). The watershed in ITE provides scope for further discussion about the implications of school-based training and how such training can be developed. Several educationalists have begun to debate some of the emerging issues, not least among these are: Blair and Bourdillon (forthcoming); Barton et al. (1994); Maclellan, (1994); Hargreaves, D. (1994); Sidgwick et al. (1994) and Barber, 1993.

This research commenced before the above changes in ITE had begun to be implemented. The women I interviewed followed traditional ITE courses where the emphasis was on teacher 'education' and the College had the main responsibility for the education and training of its students. This is a factor which needs to be borne in mind throughout this chapter, especially when considering the aims and purpose of teaching practice in schools for students on such courses. I outline those aims below.

Teaching practice in schools

The purpose of the student teaching experience is to have the trainee demonstrate his/her ability to implement effectively and efficiently competencies acquired at the university with children in an actual class setting. This is the time when students can test their knowledge of the subject matter and

> delivery methods ... while being guided and directed by a supervising class teacher (Fisher, 1980:83).

According to Menter teaching practice 'is the real interface between studenthood and membership of the profession' (1989a:461). 'For student teachers, schools are the 'real world' (Maclellan, 1994:171). The classroom provides the opportunity for students to experience the realities of life as a teacher. The main objectives of teaching practice are to develop a broad range of practical teaching skills (Rubin, 1989), to 'promote pupil learning' (Furlong et al., 1988:20; Stones, 1984) and to practice being a teacher (Maclellan, 1994; Fish, 1989; Partington, 1982). Students learn to teach by doing teaching (Winstanley, 1992). Teaching practice allows weaknesses to be addressed and strengths to be reinforced. It is during teaching practice that students discover if they have the ability, not only to apply theoretical knowledge, but if they can actually teach. College coursework may give an indication of approaches to learning needs, but it is students' performance and competence in the classroom which is assessed and, by which they judge themselves. Do they have the makings of a good teacher? This is the question which confronts student teachers as they prepare for teaching practice in schools.

In addition to acquiring practical competence, student teachers are expected to reflect upon (theorise) their practice, that is to question their taken for granted beliefs and assumptions about pupil learning and, to consider what is required of them in the development of their own knowledge about teaching and pupil learning (Duquette, 1994; Schon, 1983). Reflection is essential to developing professional competence and represents the link between theory (college based

learning) and practice (school based learning). One of the general findings of Winstanley's study is that further research is required on teachers 'retrospective views of teaching practice' (1992:79).

The central focus of this chapter is the teaching practice experiences of black women student teachers. The intention is to address the following questions: What kind of experiences do black women student teachers have in schools? What kind of environments do they encounter? What kind of experiences shape the strategies they employ in the classroom? Are these experiences influenced by wider issues such as 'race', ethnicity, religion and gender? Finally does teaching practice reinforce their commitment to teaching? Answers to these questions may provide a basis for considering how school-based ITE can be developed.

From the moment PGCE students begin their course they experience classroom teaching. They work in pairs for two days a week with a class teacher and her/his pupils, for a minimum of fifteen weeks. I do not, in this chapter, address this particular element of the PGCE student experience. I focus rather on the block teaching practice of both the PGCE and B.Ed students. The block teaching practice is when students are in school continuously, teaching for periods of between four and seven weeks.

STUDENT PLACEMENT

Hogkinson argues that 'schools and teachers are wherever possible, carefully chosen to give students maximum support' (1991:66). However, it has been suggested that although HEIs have particular

expectations of the teaching practice experience, the allocation of students to teaching practice schools is a 'hit and miss' affair (Furlong et al., 1988:32). Not only is the process 'too time consuming' (op. cit.) but in reality there might be a shortage of schools which are able to effectively support students during teaching practice. The students I interviewed indicated that the only official criteria they were aware of that Rosehall College employed in teaching practice placement was based on childcare responsibilities. Students are allocated to a variety of neighbouring schools up to twenty miles away. Students with childcare commitments are attached to local schools, although from student accounts, it would appear that other 'hidden' criteria was used in student placement. Ella, for example, was unclear about the criteria employed for her placement.

> I don't know why they placed me at Days Hill village school. I think it was because I am black because anywhere in Rosehall would have been nearer for me than Days Hill. College said they had taken my children into consideration and sorted out the nearest school. But I don't think that was true because there were people going to Flower Hill which was ten minutes walk from my house and they could have swapped places with me because they didn't have any commitments. I had to take the children to school and nursery first and then go to Days Hill. One day it was snowing, the car wouldn't start and I couldn't get a taxi to take me to school until mid-day. That was the earliest a taxi could get to me. So I phoned to say I couldn't go into school that day. The school said it was fine, but when I went back to college I got hauled over the coals because I hadn't bothered to go into school. This lecturer actually said I

should have walked my son into town to take him to the nursery and then got myself to school. I didn't think it was fair to expect a three year old to walk so far in the snow. (Ella)

'Race' as criteria for school placement

Ella's experience above confirmed a general feeling amongst black students that colour and ethnicity were 'hidden' factors in student allocation. This, it was felt, was done on the assumption that black students would provide positive role models to children.

Muna was matched to a school with a 78% intake of South Asian pupils. The placement tutor, a governor of this particular school, saw the 'benefits of black children being taught by good black student teachers'. She regarded Muna's placement as an ideal opportunity to 'impress' the children. Muna observed that the head teacher of the school 'genuinely valued' her placement there, as he was keen to offer a reality to the children which was outside of the local representation of the South Asian community factory workers. Gillborn has similarly argued that black teachers would 'provide tangible evidence (to both staff and pupils) of the ability of ethnic minority people' (1990:209). Whilst it is clear that children need to see in their teachers role models worth emulating, the appropriateness of specifically allocating a student to a school on the basis of their skin colour or ethnicity needs careful scrutiny.

Student placement according to colour or ethnicity can have a number of effects. On the one hand black student teachers can be

positive role models to black children. - 'The children expressed surprise at having an Indian teacher who could speak Punjabi.' - On the other hand a person's ethnicity can be 'used' in ways which may at first appear positive but are actually negative. In chapter three I discussed the tendency for black students to be treated as 'professional ethnics' and the negative effects of this on the students (Blair, 1994; Blair and Maylor, 1993). Similarly, in schools, students can find themselves assigned roles and responsibilities which can be detrimental to them. At Muna's school some of the children had decided that they would do a project on Indian music and Muna was asked by the class teacher to verify the authenticity of the composition the children were practising. Although Muna was not an expert on South Asian music she felt that the children appreciated her recognition of their performance. Nevertheless, the idea of viewing black teachers as 'professional ethnics' may lead white teachers as 'knowledge managers' (Broadfoot and Osborn, 1988) to unwittingly limit the experiences and possibly life chances of both black pupils and teachers.

> We were exploring food with the class and the teacher said: "Oh you can do all those foreign things". (Rita)

Rita's example above indicates that the class teacher associated 'foreign' with colour and as such it was unlikely that a similar request would have been made of a white student. Further remarks made by Rita's class teacher reveal that in some schools skin colour is regarded as a sign of black student teachers 'suitability' for performing 'ethnic' related classroom tasks.

On another occasion, she said: "I think you had better speak to her (a pupil who was learning English as an additional language), seeing as you're the same colour she'd probably listen to you". So I said: "But I don't even speak the same language. We may be the same colour but the cultures are different". (Rita)

The increased demands that Standard Assessment Tasks (SAT's) places on teachers' time can contribute to student teachers being viewed by supervising class teachers as an 'extra pair of hands' (Miles and Middleton, 1993), but, unlike black students, white students, are not regarded or used as 'professional ethnics'. The experiences of Muna and Rita indicate that the purpose of black student placement needs to be made clear to supervising class teachers. While teachers may be well intentioned and committed to enhancing the teaching skills and understandings of students placed with them, it ought not to be assumed that class teachers will view black students in the same way as they see white students attached to their classrooms. Muna and Rita were 'disheartened' by the fact that their supervising teachers chose to regard them as an 'asset' in relation to black children and 'ethnic' related curriculum areas only. The all round contribution that both felt they could make to their respective classes was 'persistently ignored'. Clearly, if skin colour and ethniciy are used to determine the type of activities black students are able to participate in, or to deny them access to the varying teaching strategies employed by white teachers, existing negative views about black inability will be reinforced and the development of black teacher competence could be inhibited. HEIs may encourage black students to think of themselves as being just like any other student, but if they

are viewed and used as 'professional ethnics' in schools they could become de-skilled.

Once the student is placed as the 'expert' on 'ethnic' issues there is clear pressure on her to 'prove' that she is able to perform 'mainstream' tasks equally well.

> My success counted in what they thought and the fact that I was good at what I did. In a way I suppose I had to perform better than average in order to get the same sort of response that an English person might get. (Muna)

The pressure on black people to work twice as hard in order to 'prove' themselves is by no means unusual (Essed, 1991; Ward, 1990; McKellar, 1989). Teacher educators like McKellar (1989), while being duly concerned at the additional pressure endured by black student teachers, argue that black teachers should be concerned with more than 'the form and content of the education process in one's classroom' (McKellar, 1989:82). McKellar, considers it fitting that it be 'part of the role of the black teacher to think of the wider concerns of education; the positions of groups in society; the differential rates of achievement of pupils; the way schools induct pupils into different roles in society' (ibid:82). She also believes that as 'black women teachers are most likely to be able to understand the issues involved in throwing off oppression', this additional teaching role 'becomes a part of their lot' (ibid:83). It is true that black women student teachers through their own educational and life experiences, are aware of the many factors which disadvantage black pupils and how their presence in the classroom can provide

strategies to counter these oppressions. Nevertheless this additional role should not be a role solely confined to black teachers. The students I interviewed described how they saw their professional role.

> I want to be there for all of the children because it isn't just a black thing. I'm sure a lot of black teachers didn't become teachers just because they're black. They didn't sort of think, I'm going to make a difference here. They wanted to be teachers just like those other 100,000 white teachers. I want to be there to teach and help white, black, Asian children, all of them. (Bernice)

> I want to show all children, not just black children, that there are black teachers and that there are many career possibilities for all of them, if they work hard and prove that they can achieve. (Bev)

For these women the educational needs of individual children come before wider societal or group concerns. However, being a role model is not something black teachers can escape from,

> hopefully I'll give them some value by saying indirectly that I come from the same background, I speak the same language, I do the same things ... I may not like it, I might try and ignore it, reject it ... but I realise that I've got a role to play and it will always be there. (Muna)

When I thought about teaching I didn't think gosh I'm black and female I'm going to be a role model for all those other blacks out there that are wondering if they can make it or not. I just wanted to teach, that's all. I never thought of myself as a role model, but I appreciate that now I'm qualified, soon to be, that is going to be one of my roles. (Naomi)

but, this is only one of many other roles.

I'm in teaching to motivate, stimulate and educate people. That is to get them to look into themselves and say well: "I'm particularly good at this area and appreciate it. I may be weak at other areas but I can develop those". I want to help them recognize where their talents are. (Olive)

The aim to enable the development of all children probably accounts for these black students vehement rejection of the label 'black teacher'.

I don't like to put the black first. I think it puts too much emphasis on the fact that I am black and I don't want to do that. I just see myself as a teacher. (Maureen)

I don't like labels. I think you can sometimes get hung up about certain things. I don't see being black as a disadvantage, so I don't use it as a lever. (Ella)

They argue that white teachers or their roles are not defined by colour - 'they are merely teachers'.

It may be argued that placing students in schools on the basis of colour or ethnicity enables the abilities of black student teachers to be utilised in schools with a predominance of black pupils. But this means of student allocation only reinforces the impression amongst black students that their role in schools in relation to black children is considered to be different from white teachers roles. Although the need for positive black role models is great (Siraj-Blatchford, 1993b) the broader implications of this for black students need to be carefully thought through by teacher educators and placement tutors.

HEIs which have access to a number of schools undoubtedly want to give students as much experience in a variety of teaching situations. They may therefore apply the same argument of providing positive black role models in allocating black students to all white schools, to counteract the negative images white pupils/staff might have of black people. For example,

> we were talking about different jobs and I was talking about teaching and one of the children said: "Black people can't teach as good as white teachers, they can only help". I was so surprised that I didn't even react. (Olive)

Perceptions of the capabilities of black people are partly derived from the situations in which they are seen. Black student teachers recognize the importance of HEIs presenting positive black images. They do, however, question the methods employed. They particularly resented what they considered to be Rosehall's informal policy of

disclosing in advance the ethnicity of black students to teaching practice schools.

> All the teaching practices I went on, apart from one, all said that it was nice for the children to see a black teacher for a change. I said: "How did you know I was going to be black?" It turned out that the college had already told them. It wasn't just me, there were two of us. Marsha was personally told that they knew she was black. So I always had the impression that the college phoned up the school and said: "Do you mind having a black student?" I took this up with college but they told me they didn't say anything. But somebody must have said something. (Chloe)

The mere mention of student ethnicity to schools serves to confirm that colour is viewed by HEIs and schools as a 'problem'. At face value, it would seem that HEIs are faced with a dilemma. Do they try to ensure in advance that the student will be made welcome in the school by 'forewarning' the school of her ethnicity, or do they take the chance and risk possible humiliation for the student should the school reject her when, on her arrival, they realise that she is black? It seems clear that had the tutors discussed with the students the problem of racism in schools and made it clear that they needed to ensure that the environment into which they were sending the student was a positive and welcoming one, the overwhelming feeling in students, of 'a racial conspiracy' between the College and the schools would not have occurred. However, although black students may be accepted in predominantly white schools, teachers in these

schools may still have reservations about the ability of black students to 'fit in', as Ella's experience reveals.

> Bell-Heights is a nice little posh village where the rich people live. They didn't want me there ... they phoned up the college and said they didn't think I would 'fit in'. There wasn't a black child in sight, there wasn't a black anybody except me for miles around. They phoned up Mrs. Lemon who was co-ordinating it all. She came in during the third week but she couldn't see what the fuss was about. She said: "As far as I can see you are doing what you're supposed to do". The college did offer to move me to another school but I didn't see why I should have to. It was their problem. By then I had grown quite militant and I wasn't going. I stayed and they wrote a glowing report about me. I did what I was there to do which was teaching practice. I did stay perhaps because they didn't want me ... I always fought my own battles and I felt it was up to me what steps I took. I felt that college didn't support me because their main concern was to use the school again. So they made as little waves as possible. (Ella)

Ella's experience reveals both the political and social use of 'race' in student placements. Where black students are concerned, 'race' appears to determine the College's ideological approach to placement, the school's social acceptance of the student, and the political relationship between the College and the school. In all this, the student's welfare appears to be a marginal consideration. Ella's experience is an example of the College's failure to support black students in potentially volatile situations. Although Rosehall offered

to move Ella to another school, they did not contact the school initially and spell out how they expected their student to be treated. This may have been due to their fear of antagonising placement schools and consequently losing the services of those schools (Blair and Bourdillon, forthcoming). Such a discovery by the student is not only demoralizing, but affects their ability to feel positive about the teaching practice school and, 'may result in silencing the student in relation to 'bad' experiences' (op. cit.). Although black students are able to compromise and make the most of their teaching practice situations, under such circumstances they are invariably overcome by a sense of uncertainty when placed in all white schools. They enter these schools not knowing if they are going to be assessed by the same criteria applied to white students, or on the basis of their ethnicity.

> The headmistress at the end of my TP wrote a report saying that I could teach in any school because I just 'fit in'. I don't know what she meant by that but I just felt it had a racial undertone because the school was predominantly white. (Meleta)

Anyone new to a situation would have fears concerning their acceptance. They might even demonstrate a sense of uneasiness when they enter the new environment. However, it seems safe to assume that 'race' does not affect or determine white students social acceptance in British schools. In a white context white students are already 'one of us'. No matter how hard a black student tries to 'fit in' skin colour can remain a permanent barrier if it is skin colour which makes the individual 'one of us'.

Every teacher has to make the children and staff like her but it is different when you are not white. White people will never ignore the fact that you have a different skin colour and I do not expect them to, but most think that because you are Asian that you cannot really be a teacher. That's how they (teachers) treat you when you go on teaching practice so you never feel like you actually fit in. It doesn't matter how good a teacher you are, or how hard you try to get them to like you, if you're Asian they won't accept you. That's what I've found.

(Ranjit)

The possibility of being judged by skin colour and not performance in all white schools does not bode well for black student success. Black student teachers despite receiving good reports feel aggrieved that they are put in such a position.

> I felt the headmistress had prejudged me. She said: "We haven't had any black teachers before, teachers from your background". But I'm not background, I'm me, an individual.
>
> (Bernice)

It is difficult to assess without classroom observation just how much emphasis is placed on a black person's skin colour in the judgement of her/his ability during teaching practice. At times, however, students felt that their weaknesses were highlighted not with the intention of correcting practice but to confirm negative perceptions of black student ability.

I made a worksheet for the children to do things about the market place. The headteacher read it and went over it in pen before she came and talked to me about it. I also had to do an assembly and I wrote a script for the children and asked the secretary to type it for me. The headteacher saw her typing it out and told her to type it exactly as I had written it. Later the headteacher called me and started to point out where she had changed a capital letter, put a plural and things like that. She went through the whole script very patronisingly. She kept on about the high standards of the school ... I wasn't the only student, but she didn't question the other (white) student's work. She treated me like a child. (Zaria)

The class teacher picked me up on every little detail, everything that I did with the children she corrected regardless of who was there. She used to correct my speech in front of the children as if to prove that I'm not English and that I don't know how to speak the English language properly. (Yula)

Placing black students in predominantly or all white schools can be counter productive. Instead of being viewed as positive role models with the ability to challenge racism and negative perceptions about black people, the presence of a black teacher, as Bangar and McDermott state, 'often brings racism to the surface' (1989:147).

The headteacher introduced me to my class teacher and the pupils. The teacher just stared at me. Her eyes were wide open in shock. In the five weeks I was there she did not even make

an effort to remember my name. She kept calling me Tina which was the name of a Chinese girl who was there the year before. I don't know which part of me looks Chinese. (Chloe - African-Caribbean)

I knew immediately that they didn't want me there because of their attitude towards me. I knew it wasn't just a general feeling they had against students because as the teaching practice went on they (white students) were accepted by the rest of the teachers and I wasn't. (Yasmin)

It could be argued that teaching practice is strenuous enough without having to deal with these additional pressures. Black students who are allocated to schools which do not want them are put at an unfair disadvantage, because they have to work so much harder at making their teaching practice a success.

> I went in there with the attitude that I have had three years experience and I was not going to be scared off by thirty-six white kids. That's the attitude I took with the teachers as well. I think I had to in order to survive, otherwise I would never have got through it. (Muna)

Muna was particularly wary of making any mistakes in her practice in case they were viewed by her supervising class teacher and the pupils as errors peculiar to South Asian people. She felt that such an assumption would have had an adverse effect on the way South Asian people were viewed and assessed.

> I didn't want them to think that all Asian people are incompetent. (Muna)

The women in this study considered it important to experience different types of school and classroom situations if they were to develop their teaching skills and be equipped to teach in a diverse society. However, several were concerned that their teaching experiences were somewhat limited as they were continually allocated to majority white schools. The effect of such allocations therefore was to reinforce a feeling amongst the women that they were being under-skilled.

> I have never been on a practice where there is a second language in the classroom. If I was confronted with it I really wouldn't know what to do ... I told my tutor that I wouldn't mind going into a school that's typical of the inner-city because I wanted to know that I could teach and handle being in an inner-city school, but she put me in a rural school. (Chloe)

> I desperately wanted a multi-ethnic school for my final TP because the only experience I have had is in village schools. ... I just feel they've ruined it for me because I have been allocated to another village school. (Yasmin)

Placement tutors may consider the allocation of black students to predominantly or all white schools to be in the best interests of the students and the schools concerned, but if students are not informed of the purpose of placing them in particular schools, they are likely

to doubt the genuineness of the tutor's actions and put forward their own reasons for their particular school allocations. As the above has shown, black students are also likely to doubt their ability to teach in a multiracial environment. Decisions to allocate students to schools on the basis of their ethnicity or skin colour can be demoralizing for the students concerned and may inhibit their chances of continuing in teaching. However, this does not mean that black students should not be placed in majority white schools. Not all black students placed in all white schools have negative experiences, but given the experiences of some of the black women in this study it would seem appropriate to suggest that black students are not put in teaching practice situations where their self-confidence is likely to be eroded, and where they are likely to be haunted by a sense of insecurity and self-doubt. As one student put it,

> ... they would always be suspecting, is she good? Or saying, "She's no good". I didn't want that. (Ranjit)

EXPERIENCES OF RACISM

Siraj-Blatchford (1991) has pointed out that racism is a feature of black students' ITE experiences. For many, teaching practice experience 'provided the worst experiences of racial discrimination' (ibid:46). Her respondents cited examples of physical and verbal abuse, negative attitudes towards themselves and the black children at the schools. My own study confirmed that racism plays a major role in the teaching practice experience of black student teachers.

Children's racism

There were four children, nine year olds, who were not in my class who were being racist. They put their hands together and kept bowing down and making funny noises at me. I was shocked so I didn't say anything. The following Monday while I was in class teaching they did it outside the classroom window. I told their class teacher but he was not interested. He said, it was not his problem so he told the head. The head said, it was not his problem either and that the class teacher should deal with it. The teacher was cross that the head wanted him to deal with it.... The parents of one of the children came in. Their son had denied his involvement. He had been crying for a couple of days and wouldn't attend school. The father wanted a meeting with me. The head wanted a meeting with me. The head took me in his office and suggested that I should meet with the parents. He told me it was advisable that I have someone with me from a legal point of view. I felt like I was on trial. I had already told the head what had happened. I wasn't lying so what would meeting the parents prove? I said I wouldn't meet them. I wanted the head to support me and deal with it. My supervisor said I was under no obligation to meet the parents. (Zita)

It has been suggested that teacher sensibilities and their construction of reality are based on their own everyday understandings of life (Kailin, 1994; King, 1994; Avery and Walker, 1993; Taylor, 1993; Cohen, 1989). Following on from this, it could be argued that the headteacher at Zita's placement school had a strong

case for not addressing her complaint, because he did not know how to deal effectively with racism, as it did not fall within the remit of his everyday experience and understanding of life. The headteacher's inexperience of racism might also have led him to believe that Zita was better qualified to meet with the children's parents and resolve the matter herself, because it was she who had identified her experience as being one of racism. As the majority of teachers are white and racism is embedded in the structures of society (Sarup, 1991), the lack of support given to Zita may be seen by some as a 'rational response to racism in the educational system' (Troyna and Williams, 1986:46). Although racism is widespread in Britain the effects of racism on black peoples' lives are not always understood or acknowledged. As the opinions of the headteacher were not sought[1] it is impossible to say conclusively if he understood the effects of racism on the black student teacher, or to provide any concrete reasons for his inaction.

The school's denial of responsibility for children's acts of racism have a number of effects on the black student. First, the student feels isolated because of the lack of support from the school. Secondly, the student is rendered vulnerable because of her lack of status.

> I felt I had to get allies from staff but all the channels that I could go through were white. I really felt vulnerable in the

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[1] It is important to note that as this was a life history study I did not seek to establish views other than those given by the students themselves. What was of interest was how black women students experienced the teaching situation and how they reacted to it.

meeting, the classroom and the staffroom. I really don't know if I belonged in there. The head should have supported me.

During teaching practice all student teachers are in a relatively powerless position, but the added dimension of 'race' helps to make black students teaching practices more difficult (Crozier and Menter, 1993, Siraj-Blatchford, 1991, Menter, 1989a). The relations of power in school are such that if Zita had refused to meet the children's parents this would have been taken as a clear admission that she had lied. The headteacher may have thought that this was the only way of dealing with the situation, but his actions actually served to reinforce the power differential between student and headteacher, and between black and white groups. It could be argued that teachers routinely meet and discuss their pupils with parents and without the headteacher's intervention. This, however, may depend on the seriousness of the problems. On this occasion, Zita felt that the issue warranted the headteacher's intervention. The lack of support not only left Zita with a 'bad taste in her mouth', but may have reinforced in the children that this kind of behaviour was acceptable.

Hammersley (1990) has shown how teachers stick together when one or more has a problem with pupils, and how they rely on each other for information about pupil behaviour and support in their dealings with disruptive and violent pupils. Hargreaves (1972) has also outlined the 'dominant value' of staff loyalty in schools. In Zita's school it was noticeable that the staff did not appear to support the headteacher in his dealings with Zita's complaint. An explanation for this can be found in the fact that racism was likened to 'a hot

potato' which few members of staff were prepared to discuss. Klein notes that there is a 'common-sense notion that talking about racism makes it happen' (1993:114). The headteacher, however, viewed Zita's complaints of pupil racism as refutable. He argued that because the school had employed a black teacher before and no such problems had surfaced, that there was 'no problem' now. The underlying assumption in this argument is that the presence of a token black teacher removes the need to address racism, but as Ranjit demonstrates the presence of a black teacher does not mean that prejudice does not exist (see also Casey, 1992).

> There was so much going on there but nobody wanted to see it. It was just ignored. For example, some of the children didn't like me at all. To start off with they were making lots of remarks, muttering under their breath things like, it was not uniform day and some of the Asian children were wearing their traditional clothing and two boys said: "This is England you know"... then they started to talk about other black children. I asked them: "Why don't you like them? What's bothering you about them?" So one said: "My father said, they are all dirty and they're horrible. They shouldn't be here and if we could we would send them back or kill them". All these things were coming out of them, so much hatred and they would very often show that to the black children. (Ranjit)

Although racism in young children has been well established (Connolly, 1995; MacNaughton, 1993; Troyna, 1993, 1989; Troyna and Hatcher, 1992; Wright, 1992; Norcross, 1990; Menter, 1989b) this does not mean that racism cannot be understood and overcome by

children (Epstein, 1993; Carrington and Short, 1991). Woods (forthcoming) has shown that children demonstrate feelings of 'outrage when they are presented with examples of unfairness and injustice'. It seems to be apparent that when children have had the opportunity to analyse the specific nature of racism and how it works that they indeed show compassion (Short and Carrington, 1987), but one has to ask if that kind of awareness raising is prevalent in schools. In many subjects 'race' as an issue is not discussed with children. Few, therefore, will have an understanding of why racism is wrong. In Zita's school there was no adult who was prepared to provide moral leadership and examine 'the ways in which race and racism shape and impact on the social world of children' (Harvey, 1993:7) or take responsibility for dealing with their acts of racism.

Zita felt that her complaints of racism had resulted in her being regarded as 'the problem' whilst the perpetrators of racism were treated as 'innocent victims'. She suggested that the headteacher sought every opportunity to undermine her and cast doubt on her teaching abilities.

> The head kept coming into my classroom when I was teaching. He kept observing my ability and teaching skills and that put a damper on things. Yet I was doing really well. Both my supervisor and the class teacher felt I was doing well. I had lots of success with those five to six year olds. If I hadn't done so well, if I hadn't been successful I don't know what would have happened.

One way of interpretating the headteacher's observations of Zita's practice is to suggest that he was trying to be supportive. If this was his intention then one would have expected the headteacher to take the preliminary steps of informing the student that he was going to sit in on her lessons. A discussion of his findings would then have ensued. Zita was unaware of the headteacher's aims and she neither received confirmation that her practice was good, nor advice on how to improve. Another way of interpretating the headteacher's actions is to view them as a form of surveillance. This was Zita's perception. Any student in the early stages of their training might have felt surveyed as a student, but Zita's feelings of discomfort as a black student were compounded by the incident which took place in the school and the headteacher's negative reaction to it. Teachers who have had similar experiences of headteachers observing their practice might view this particular headteacher's actions as being without malice. As far as Zita was concerned this kind of surveillance seemed to imply that if 'students complain of racism there must be something wrong with their own practice'.

In response to the DES (1992) consultation proposals for ITE reform and the specific exhortation that the 'best teachers' be given responsibility for training teachers, the CRE (1992) recommends that,

> ... teachers given this responsibility are identified by their ability to demonstrate a range of competencies including an understanding of, and/or, curriculum development of relevance to multi-racial and multi-lingual needs (para 2g. p. 4).

In assessing her own ability to reflect the multiracial nature of society in her teaching, Zita wanted to introduce multicultural issues into the classroom. But she felt unable to do so as the headteacher was constantly observing her practice. She feared that if she had that this would have led to her being negatively assessed by the headteacher, especially as multicultural issues were not normally covered by the teacher of the class she was attached to, and they were not evident in the school as a whole. A negative assessment would undoubtedly have culminated in the failure of her teaching practice. Zita did try to explain to individual children when asked why she dressed differently, but she did not feel that they were able to 'comprehend fully the different meanings people applied to dress', without a more general class discussion, or topic work. Zita believed that had she followed this through this might have given the headteacher grounds to question her teaching ability.

The school's failure to acknowledge diversity and difference together with the children's questioning of Zita's traditional attire reinforced ideas Zita already had about feeling unwelcome in this school. At the end of the practice Zita voiced her anxiety about wearing the clothes she felt the 'most comfortable in' on future teaching practices. Zita considered her traditional dress of shalwar kameez as an essential part of her identity - 'it's part of who I am' - but she was concerned that the way she dressed may even have aroused the prejudices already held by some of the children about black people. It is interesting to note that the questioning of modes of dress is not confined to white pupils. Ranjit found that South Asian girls too asked why she did not dress like them. As Muslims, the wearing of dresses by South Asian women was not familiar to them.

This suggests that children are not necessarily questioning a teacher's identity but merely being inquisitive. Nevertheless white children's questions can sometimes be underpinned or tinged by racism and this may have an impact on how black students' view their acceptance by white pupils.

A superficial reading of Zita's experiences might lead HEIs and schools to conclude that black student teachers are 'too sensitive', that they 'over-react' to situations which appear 'harmless'. However, it is worth pointing out that whilst an incident might appear trivial to the onlooker, the person who has experienced it might be deeply hurt by it. For a clearer understanding to be arrived at we need to consider Zita's response in the context of the impact of racism on her life outside of teaching. Zita's daily experiences were compounded by the constant victimisation of her by her neighbours. She was called 'Paki' and accused of 'polluting' with curry smells, the block of flats she lived in. The main culprit behind this abuse had smashed her windows twice, urinated on her doorstep whenever she answered the front door and repeatedly left dog faeces outside her front door. Zita feared that these acts would escalate into physical attacks upon her person, or on her children. The final insult for Zita was the Council's offer of a flat which she did not consider to be 'fit for human habitation'. It is important to note that an individual's response to racism will depend not only on the context in which it occurs, but on how the person is affected by it. Partnership schools and HEIs may not see the relevance of Zita's reaction or rush to support black students who complain of racism if it is not blatantly obvious that the incidents are racial. This would seem to indicate that if our comprehension of black students' responses to perceived

racism is to be developed, ultimately what is is required is a more informed understanding of racial oppression and its effects on black peoples' lives.

Children's racism and Teacher's emotions

Student teachers are expected to successfully complete the requirements of teaching practice before they can earn the accolade of teacher. In other words if they do not prove to be competent in the classroom, regardless of their theoretical competence, they will fail. In order to gain a wider understanding of what is meant by professional competence the views of Tickle (1991) will be expounded at length. Tickle (1991; 1993) sought to understand how teachers handle the emotional aspects of their work. He asserted through his research with first year teachers that teachers go through a variety of emotions in the classroom.

> Excitement and elation as well as anxiety and anger, satisfaction and success as well as fear of failure, were aroused by the experiences of classroom events, staffroom relationships, and contact with parents or LEA personnel (Tickle, 1991:322).

Even though the experiences highlighted by the teachers in Tickle's (1991) study at times presented a challenge to their self-confidence in the classroom, there was nothing they could not 'cope with'. One of the teacher's gave this example,

... I had what I'd call a very naughty pupil, who'd missed one of my lessons. So I chased her up ... she came in and I said, "Why don't you come to my lesson?" She told me that she'd missed the bus, or something, so I said, "OK, I'll give you all the homework that you've got to catch up on". So there she was stood in front of the desk, I was saying "You've got to do this, this" and I was looking down at the work I was giving her, and I looked up and I noticed, I mean, I felt so bad about this, ... she was beginning to sway a little bit, and it all happened so quickly and I said to her "Are you alright?" and with that she fell backwards, her head hit a desk with an enormous thud, and she fell on the floor ... I was obviously very shaken up by this ... all this blood was streaming out of her head, and I said, "Oh God". And we sorted it all out and we sent her home ... she is so naughty, this is why I felt so guilty, I thought she was having me on, you see. "Are you sure you're all right?" "No I don't think so" - bang, over and if it had been any other pupil I would have noticed it, but because it was her I just ignored it and I think in another situation now I would try and relate better to the pupils perhaps, not prejudge them like I was judging that girl. And obviously it was the guilt (ibid:323-4).

According to Andrew Hargreaves, 'guilt is a feature of many teachers emotional lives' (1994:155). He states that, 'feelings of guilt ... can be profound and deeply troubling' (ibid:142). Teachers who find it difficult to 'cope with' the burdens of their guilt often become depressed, experience burnout, or opt for early retirement in the most severe cases. For Hargreaves, 'depressive guilt' is more acute

when teachers fail to 'hear a child's problem ... or listen to their faltering thoughts' (ibid:144).

From my own research it is clear that black students find themselves having to deal with an additional range of emotional and psychological traumas. Often the emotions which surface are ones that they find the most difficult to 'cope with'. As Bernice reveals,

> I was comfortable with the class. I was comfortable with the school. I was comfortable with the staff. Then one day I went into my class and I was working on the board and behind my back there were some children saying things. First of all they started using my first name and I just ignored it. It wasn't something that I was worried about. I just thought they did that sort of thing anyway. Then there was: "Why are you black? You black so and so. Bernice is black". Then there was language like: "You black bitch", not really directed at me but to see whether or not I would respond and how I would respond. Because I was comfortable in the class, that threw me. I didn't know what to do and I didn't know what to say to the teacher to make them stop. I just left the classroom and started to cry ... I was there to teach but I didn't know how to deal with it so I had to remove myself from the classroom which was embarrassing for me. (Bernice)

In looking at Zita's experiences of children's racism I stated that an individual's response to racism is dependent on the context in which it occurs, and on how the person is affected by their experience. Bernice's example above, illustrates in addition, that it is the surprise

element of racism which sometimes contributes to the way in which the individual responds - 'I was amazed, I didn't know what to do'. Overt examples of racism were not part of Bernice's everyday experience. The name calling by these children hurt more because it was so unexpected. Racist name calling occurs in a variety of contexts (see for example, Connolly, 1995; Troyna, 1993; Troyna and Hatcher, 1992; CRE - Learning in Terror, 1987) but this particular brand of racist name calling by children, directed at the student teacher can be damaging to one's self confidence in the classroom. Despite this being Bernice's very first teaching experience, the supervising class teacher did not view her situation sympathetically. He could not understand why Bernice had allowed herself to become 'so upset', confirming Essed's contention that,

> without general knowledge of racism individuals cannot comprehend the meaning of racism (1991:77).

The teacher's lack of understanding of Bernice's dilemma was evident in his assessment of her practice. He remarked that she needed to learn to deal more positively with emotional matters in the class. This corresponds with Tickle's (1991, 1993) view of teaching. Tickle (1991) describes emotional sufferance, 'going through it', as part of becoming a teacher. Bernice's experience is a good example of 'going through it', but, unlike the teachers in Tickle's study Bernice's experience does not contribute to developing her competence as a teacher. Instead, she is unable to 'cope with' her emotions and leaves the classroom crying. Tickle states that, 'managing one's emotional self is an intrinsic part of managing pupils' learning' (1991:322). So it is important for teachers to learn to

control their emotions. Black teachers, like white teachers, have to learn to 'cope with' unexpected situations which might affect children's welfare or their learning. However, what this kind of analysis ignores is the specific nature of racist abuse which is directed at the individual. Both Zita and Bernice's experiences illustrate that racism can come in different forms. Whatever the form of racism the effect on the individual is the same. It causes pain and distress. Like Zita, Bernice was 'totally dismayed' by her experience. She feared that she would always be 'rejected' by white pupils in schools. The experience of racism does not equate with the incidents the teachers in Tickle's (1991) study refer to, such as, experiencing feelings of guilt after failing to diagnose a pupil's ill health. Despite the complexities associated with experiences of guilt, guilt is an emotion which can be overcome or worked through with time. The teacher who experiences it can vow never to make the same mistake again, but this cannot be done when it is the teacher who is on the receiving end and it is her racial identity which triggers the abuse and the emotional response.

It is often asserted by teachers that children do not see colour in their interactions with others, but skin colour was often the first thing that pupils identified.

> On one of my visits before I started teaching practice, one of the children remarked that he was going to call me 'brownie'. But I just said: "No I don't think that would be a good idea, just call me Mrs. Brill". (Bev)

In my first teaching practice a girl aged seven said: "Why are you black? Isn't it horrible being black?" I couldn't understand why a child of that age would ask such a question. (Chloe)

> ... one child came up to me and said: "Miss, so and so said you are a 'blackie'". (Meleta)

According to Milner (1983) children accord different values to different skin colours (see also Connolly, 1995). Bernice was called a 'black bitch' and referred to as, 'you black so and so'. The terms 'bitch' or 'slag' for example, are offensive to all women. They are hurtful because they imply that such women are not 'good' women. 'Good' women are demure, feminine, 'decent'. Lees (1986) considers the existence of terms like 'slag' to be more important than who is identified as such. However, it is highly relevant to consider the object of such terms because whilst notions of respectability exist to subordinate all women 'racialized discourses of female sexuality 'privilege' white women over black women' (Brah, 1992:73).

Walkerdine (1987) has pointed to the ability of boys as young as four years old to control the behaviour of girls and the female class teacher through the use of sexist language. By reducing the teacher to the level of sex 'object' the boys were able to resist the teacher's attempts to control them. The association of women with 'tits, bums and cunts' enabled the boys to assume powerful subject positions over the class teacher. As the boys became more competent in their use of oppressive words the class teacher appeared powerless to stop them. However, the class teacher's lack of action was due to her

belief in the child-centred notion that children need to be left to develop in their own way. Walkerdine (1986) considers child-centred pedagogy as being responsible for pupils challenging teacher power and for 'women teachers being caught, trapped inside a concept of nurturance which held them responsible for the freeing of each little individual, and therefore for the management of an idealist dream, an impossible fiction' (ibid:55).

Mackinnon (1989) is sceptical of Walkerdine's (1987) findings. He questions whether girls would use similar words to their class teacher. He argues that 'girls are not always respectful and that male teachers do not always find boys deferential' (ibid:11). He further attempts to reduce the nature of the boys offence by stating that they were, 'trying their hardest to be as naughty and 'dirty' as possible' (ibid:11). It is not clear from Walkerdine's (1987) findings if the boys understood the semantic content of the words they used or the impact they would have, but it would appear that they were aware of 'accessing' male power - a privilege that the teacher and the female pupils did not have (for further examples of infant boys sexism see Connolly, 1995).

According to Lees (1987), racism can work through sexist categories. Bernice's 'racial' identity together with her gender were used to objectify her and ensure that she was rendered powerless. This illustrates how racism quite readily 'articulates with gender' (Troyna, 1994:331). It might be argued that these children's expressions were uttered without 'commitment to racist (or sexist - my addition) beliefs' (Hatcher and Troyna, 1993:116) and that they were merely an attempt to see how far they could go before Bernice

capitulated. However, the Swann Report (1985) points out that racist name calling, 'is a reference not only to the child (individual) but also by extension to their family and indeed more broadly to their ethnic community as a whole' (quoted by Kelly, 1990: 89). It is worth noting that although white female teachers might have been called 'bitch', or found themselves questioned about their virginity (O'Connell Rust, 1994) and equally found this distressing, their 'race' would not be an additional part of the disparaging remarks (see Brah, 1992). Undoubtedly, white would not have been used as a derogatory reference point as it is an accepted status. White people in Britain 'belong' (Glove, 1984; for further elaboration of belonging see Cambridge and Feuchtwang, 1992; Gilroy, 1987), black people, unlike whites, are considered extraneous to white British society. Therefore such an insult attacks the most important elements of one's identity. This point is further illustrated by a fourth year secondary school pupil in Gillborn's study (1995) who had similarly been called a 'black bitch'.

> It was ever so hard for me when somebody called me a "black bitch" ... Not the "bitch", the "black". I can say to myself I am not a bitch but I can't say to myself I am not black. That is something I can't do anything about. And I know in what context it is used, it is used as an insult (Gillborn, 1995:142).

Bernice, who describes herself as 'a big lady', had entered the classroom prepared for attacks on her size. She had thought that if it was going to be anything it would be her size, but she was dumbfounded when it was her colour which triggered the abuse. Size was never mentioned. The fact that Bernice confesses that she would

not have minded being ridiculed because of her weight shows the demoralizing effects of racism. Throughout my interviews with Bernice it was clear that she was confident about her 'racial' identity. Nevertheless it might be argued that someone more positive about their self identity would not have been so disturbed by these racial taunts, but 'being ... black (in a white society - my addition) is seldom an easy experience' (Ward, 1990:219).

The ability of teachers to deal with emotional situations is more complex than Tickle (1991, 1993) allows. Sparkes (1994) highlights the dilemma faced by a white lesbian teacher who, on the one hand fears exposure of her sexuality by inquisitive children and adults, and on the other, the loss of her employment if she 'comes out' in what is a predominantly heterosexual environment. The experience of another white lesbian teacher (in DeLyon and Migniuolo, 1989) confirms that lesbian teachers suffer harrassment from pupils and staff. But, unlike the teacher in Sparkes's (1994) study, this teacher had felt compelled to raise issues of sexuality and harrassment with pupils and staff. Whilst the sexual politics of her school made this essential, her attempts at awareness raising actually drew attention to her own sexuality. Although this teacher was partially able to 'come out' she still felt it necessary to protect herself from homophobic abuse by dressing in a manner that did not draw attention to her sexuality. Hiding one's sexuality in order to conform to normative heterosexual expectations might shield one from abuse, but it does not diminish the injustice. The difference with skin colour, however, is that skin colour cannot be hidden. For many black student teachers their negative experiences during teaching practice are directly related to their skin colour (Clay et al., 1991;

Siraj-Blatchford, 1991). These are experiences which are beyond their control, but this does not mean that they should be expected to 'prepare' themselves for dealing with racist abuse. Some may assume that as racism is an everyday occurrence (Essed, 1991) for black people it is therefore something that can be mentally 'prepared for'. However, though it might be expected, racism cannot be 'prepared for'.

> If you're honest with yourself you know that most white people are racist and that it is just waiting to come out. If you're walking down the street or sitting on the bus you can hear their racism. But usually you don't expect them to attack you. When I was on teaching practice and the children started calling me 'blackie' and telling me to go back to the jungle where I had come from I wondered what had happened. I was flabbergasted. I couldn't believe those were the same children who the day before had been so nice to me. (Meleta)

The examples of Bernice and Zita cited above help to illustrate the shifting and changing nature of racism. Racism can seem to be 'harmless' in one context - as in the case of children mocking South Asian customs - and more harmful in another - with children shouting verbal abuse. However, from the individual responses of Bernice and Zita it can be seen that racist abuse in whatever form can have a devastating effect on the person who experiences it.

If we follow Tickle's (1991, 1993) argument to its logical conclusion, the professional competence student teachers develop during teaching practice should enable them to deal confidently with

emotional situations in the classroom, and help them to facilitate pupil learning. If black students are to be enabled to demonstrate their professional competence in schools, one would hope that their performance is not conditioned at the outset or hindered by fears of having to 'cope with' racism. As school-based teacher training becomes the norm it will be even more important to ensure that 'coping with' racism is not one criteria by which black students' professional competence will be assessed in schools.

Teacher racism

Furlong et al., found that during teaching practice students 'felt themselves to be less sheltered and more able to demonstrate initiative and capabilities' (1988:45). The third year teaching practice affords students the opportunity to illustrate initiative and teaching skills in the classroom.

To be recommended for qualified teacher status Sita needed to show through her practice in the classroom awareness of 'the needs of children of differing abilitities including special educational needs and gifted children' (Rosehall Primary B.Ed document, 1991:19). As part of her teaching Sita wanted to include the children who were learning English as an additional language. She, however, found that this clashed with the wishes of the Section 11 teacher who had overall responsibility for language support.

I planned an activity for her group that I thought was quite simple to carry out so she wouldn't have a lot of input into it unless she chose to. I made sure that there was something for

them to do afterwards should they finish early and she just tore it to pieces right in front of me. I was really upset. It was as if she did not appreciate me as a black student. She couldn't accept a student giving her orders and an Asian one at that.

It was earlier stated that it was not within the remit of this life history research to obtain the views of the teachers and College staff who were involved in the black students' teaching practices. Without the Section 11 teacher's view it is impossible to reach a final conclusion as to her opinions of Sita's teaching plan. However, it is reasonable to suggest that this Section 11 teacher already vulnerable and without status, might have reacted like this to any student who attempted to reduce her role in the classroom. She was after all a mature teacher with several years of experience. Perhaps Sita's initiative highlighted her own inadequacies and she feared exposure. Her behaviour might also have been the result of assumptions about the ability of the children. Whatever the teacher's motives or reasons, the student's attempts at being a 'good' teacher were undermined as were her efforts to demonstrate her ability to fulfil the requirements of the teaching practice.

Sita's initial response, like Bernice's, was to burst into tears - 'that's the first time I've ever cried over anything to do with teaching'. This was followed by a re-assessment of her abilities. Sita reminded herself of the purpose of teaching practice. She was there to pass not fail. Sita's determination was also possibly stirred by her mentor's official assessment of the episode between herself and the Section 11 teacher as, 'has difficulty with staff relationships'. The ultimate effect of the Section 11 teacher's actions was to make Sita more

determined to demonstrate her competence both in the classroom and in staff relationships and, to ensure that she had a positive teaching practice. This was necessary if she was to succeed as a teacher.

> I thought if teaching practice was not going to be a positive experience, then I wouldn't go into teaching. It was that kind of situation; I'd really had the wind blown out of my sails.

It could be argued that Sita reacted to her negative experience in an exceptional way. Another student may have been unable to perform adequately during teaching practice as a result of the Section 11 teacher's attitude and could possibly have used her negative experience as a reason to leave teaching.

King argues that 'prospective teachers need both an intellectual understanding of schooling and inequity as well as self-reflective, transformational growth experiences' (1994:337). Throughout her schooling and in the first year of her B.Ed degree Sita had spent most of her time 'trying to fit in', to 'be almost white' (see Fordham and Ogbu 1986). The reaction of the Section 11 teacher and the recent death of her mother forced Sita to reflect more closely on her practice and development as a teacher, as well as on the importance and value of her own culture. Calderhead (1988) argues that the reflection of student teachers is generally superficial. In the following extract Sita reveals the extent of her reflection.

> It actually made me value my culture more ... the whole teaching experience pointed out my culture and emphasised

it. I had to make a decision. I had to decide right, is this hindering me? "Oh dear why was I ever born black?" or if I was going to step out of it and say: "Well darn it I value who I am". I have had to adjust myself mentally into being more culturally aware, valuing my experiences because I am equal to anybody whether black or white and to really value what I have, the person that I am and the background that I come from.... I realised that if I didn't value my culture more I would lose it and further down the line when I wanted to go back to my roots I might not have access to it. If I value it, it is going to benefit my husband, our children when we have them and the children I teach. I have seen other people who have had mixed marriages who have brought up their children as if they were only English, there comes a point when the family comes along and the children can't speak to them because they don't have the language. I don't want to put myself in that position or any children that I may have. I want them to have access to the culture and the languages that I speak. She (the Section 11 teacher) made me realise that the background I have is valuable, that it is not to be taken for granted, that I should include it in my teaching, bring it out in the classroom because it's part of who I am.

Foster has rebuked teacher education for not considering the influence of 'the racial identity of teachers on their belief systems and teaching practice' (1990:123). Through the process of her development as a teacher Sita utilised her awakened 'racial' identity to make conscious decisions about her dress (wearing shalwar kameez whenever she felt it appropriate), her attitudes to staff, to

pupils and to her classroom teaching. Collins regards 'consciousness as a sphere of freedom' (1990:103). Sita used her new found freedom as 'power' to 'create an oppositional worldview' (hooks, 1990:15) to the one presented by the Section 11 teacher, and to define her own role in the classroom. In her final practice for example, she decided not to talk about celebrations like Diwali precisely because this was expected of her. This was essential to her quest for acceptance as a 'real' teacher. With a reconstituted voice Sita became more confident and appreciative of her own abilities as a teacher.

Sita's reflections provide us with an insight into how personal biography can impact on black teacher development, their 'racial' identity and ultimately, their practice as teachers.[2] Munro (1987) states that personal biography 'may well have more significant effects on teaching behaviour than the training experience itself' (cited by Knowles, 1992:105). While this may be true in some cases it can also be argued on the basis of Sita's experience, that certain aspects of the student training experience have more impact than personal biography on the attitude and practice of some student teachers. If our comprehension of black teacher development is to be extended we need to examine further the 'situational self' (Bullough et al., 1991:195; Nias, 1989). How black student teachers see themselves and their role in the classroom will help us to understand the type of teachers that they become.

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2 For an elaboration of the effect of biography on teachers' practice see for example, Hargreaves, A., 1994; Goodson, 1993, 1991; McElroy-Johnson, 1993; Woods, 1993; Beattie, 1992; Knowles, 1992; Nias, 1989.

Before concluding this section, it is worth exploring further the purpose of reflection in teaching practice. One of the College's requirements in assessing teacher competence relates to the need for students to be reflective.

> Student teachers should demonstrate this quality by their ability to observe and analyse their own performance and through evaluation make changes to their future behaviour. An openness to ideas and adaptability should also be present, together with a questioning attitude. This reflection and assessment of their own learning should assist competence in the formulative assessment of children's learning (Rosehall Primary B.Ed document, 1991:19).

Sita had already demonstrated her ability to refine her practice through reflection and critical self evaluation. Johnston states that teaching practice should also provide students with opportunities to explore 'the dilemmas and contradictions' (1994:80) they observe and experience. This form of reflection (although part of the College's criteria for student assessment) was not always viewed by schools as a positive aspect of the teacher's development and was likely to produce negative results. Sita explains,

> My school mentor said: "Deal with me as you would a college tutor". So I thought I would discuss issues which I had come across; like the wide variety of learning needs within the classroom. This was in the first week, but he saw my questions as a weakness. In my report he noted that I had, 'difficulty coping with a wide variety of learning needs', but I had just

brought them up as a conversation point, a point of interest. It was not a weakness. If it was something that I was not meeting then fair enough, but I was. ... All the things that I had discovered and looked at, explored or realised, he saw those as weaknesses (see also Copeland et al., 1993).

It is argued that school mentors play an important part in the development of student teachers' practice (Booth, 1993). For many experienced teachers mentoring provides a 'rare opportunity' for them to engage in reflective teaching (Hargreaves, D., 1994). However, as Jacques (1992) has pointed out, many mentors find facilitating reflection difficult precisely because of their own inexperience in this field. The lack of understanding of the mentoring role on the part of Sita's mentor further illustrates that some school mentors are unable to give students adequate support (see also Williams, 1994; Booth, 1993). Consequently, this may have an effect on the ability of student teachers to develop professional competence and fulfil the requirements of their teaching practice. (Blair and Bourdillon, op. cit., discuss in detail areas for possible development in the school mentoring role.)

There was no official forum at Rosehall for students to address their concerns about teaching practice. Such a forum would enable students to apply what they learn and transform their teaching practices (see for example, Furlong, 1990).

The notion of reflection involves not only reflection about one's beliefs and choices in practice, but also relates to consciousness raising about the socio-political contexts in

which one must act and even transform (May and Zimpher, 1986:95).

From Sita's account it would appear that the attitudes of some teachers are racist, but as King suggests, rather than attempting to prove that they are racist, one should identify, understand and bring to the perpetrator's attention, 'their uncritical and limited ways of thinking' (King, 1994:342). This is considered important particularly where a teacher will continue to have responsibility for black children and for other black students. Zeichner and Tabachnick (1982) advocate that teachers should engage in the 'self scrutiny of one's belief system' (cited by Hogan, 1983:32) but the likelihood that HEIs and schools will address these issues remains a remote possibility, especially as more and more schools opt out of LEA control. The cost of sending a student to a particular school for teaching practice may in any case deter some HEIs from using grant maintained schools, even if they are 'better' schools in terms of the experience offered. It is possible that in the future HEIs may erect a league table of schools based on cost rather than on the type of experience offered.

Teacher racism, like children's racism, creates many difficulties for black students. Sita's story highlights the devastating effect that some teaching practice experiences can have on black student teachers self-confidence. Despite this, my interviews with the black women in this research led me to conclude that many, like Sita, use their negative experiences as learning events. Each negative experience is re-interpreted and reversed in an attempt to produce

positive results. Black students realise that if they are to be successful as teachers this process is essential.

> I do not think you can come unscathed from a racist experience but you can either make it work for you or against you. I have tried to use them in a positive way. That is the only way if you want to get through. (Olive)

Clearly, these women regarded their negative teaching practice experiences as providing them with opportunities for developing and increasing their professional competence. However, it is highly unlikely that the skills black students develop in combatting racism will be rewarded in the assessments they receive. Finally, it is important to stress that although Sita has clearly demonstrated the ability of black students to define their own role in the classroom as a result of racism in schools, racism is not the foundation on which black students' should be expected to develop professional competence. It is hoped that greater awareness of the issues will mean that black students' skills and abilities as teachers would be allowed to emerge through positive experiences in the classroom.

RELATIONS BETWEEN STUDENT AND SUPERVISOR

Supervising class teachers

All student teachers are supervised by experienced class teachers and ITE staff, but as ITE supervisors are responsible for providing feedback to more than one student a large part of the supervising role falls to the supervising class teacher (Fish, 1989). Supervising

teachers are meant to be supportive, give guidance and build on the knowledge base of the HEI in developing the practical competences of student teachers (Zeichner, 1980).

Black students felt that some of the problems which they faced on teaching practice were related to staff attitude and perceptions of black people.

> I think it was me personally. I think I was the wrong colour and she could not handle that. I mean it cannot always be colour and she probably wouldn't say it was, but I'm sure it was. She simply switched off when I spoke to her. I did not feel comfortable with her at all. Compared to other teachers I have worked with she was really cold. Others have shown their initial shock, but they soon soften and get to know you. They give you advice if something is wrong, but with her, there was hardly any communication at all. (Zita)

It has been suggested that the presence of the student teacher in the classroom often brings the personal prejudices of the supervising class teacher to the surface (Hogan, 1983). It is noticeable that where black students are concerned such prejudices can affect perceptions of black educational performance.

> I was classed as a 'fail' by my class teacher. College thought I wasn't brilliant but I was definitely not a fail. So I had to have a second opinion. An external examiner came in to see me. She saw my lesson and told the college supervisor that she was happy with what she saw and that I should pass. Then she told

me that the class teacher thought my teaching difficulties related to the difficulties he felt black people had 'fitting in'. But I got on well with the children and other staff, it was only he who thought I had difficulty 'fitting in'. (Yasmin)

McKellar states that, schools 'absorb the prevailing culture of society to produce low expectations of black pupils by staff and other pupils alike' (1989:76; see also Mirza, 1992; Gillborn, 1990; Wright, 1987). Marsha's experience seems to indicate that low teacher expectations are not confined to children alone but also operate against black teachers.

I couldn't relate to the class teacher I had. She was very arrogant, sarcastic. Every thing I did seemed to be wrong for her. There was nothing I could do to please her. It was rather disappointing. What annoyed me was when she told my supervisor that I hardly ever stayed after school. The fact is, I did. I stayed till half past five every evening, sometimes half past seven, doing displays. But this teacher said that I hardly ever stayed after school hours. I really worked hard but that wasn't taken into account. I think it's so unfair. I think they expected less of me from the word go. I think they probably felt that I would not be as good as the rest of the staff. I picked that up immediately from my class teacher. I felt that she did not have any high expectations of me at all. I tried to take on every suggestion, every idea that she gave me. I tried to take them on as best I could. I never protested ... I always did what she told me but it was never right. (Marsha)

The difficulties Marsha experienced may have been due to a lack of understanding between herself and the supervising class teacher, or her inability to fulfil the class teacher's expectations. Gliessman et al. (1988) argue that it is not unusual for teachers who are new to a school to have 'survival' concerns, or to question their ability to live up to the school's expectations. The majority of student teachers whether they are black or white are likely to doubt their ability to live up to the class teacher's expectations. Some students might even perform below their own ability as a result of such fears. However, from student accounts it would appear that low teacher expectations formed a part of some supervising class teacher's assessment of the black women's teaching practice.

It was earlier shown in chapter two that some of the black women in this study were not expected to do well in their secondary schooling and that when they did, teachers found it difficult to accept, or affirm this fact. For those students who excelled beyond the supervising class teacher's expectations the assessment they often received did not reflect their practice.

> My college supervisor thought I was a distinction student and the headmaster even asked why I had not been given a distinction. He felt that I deserved it, but the class teacher said: "Oh no, just give her a 'good pass', we can't give her a distinction". (Chloe)

One is forced to reflect on the possible effects of such attitudes on the student teacher. Low teacher expectations can result in black student teachers feeling apprehensive about attaining marks in teaching

practice which reflect their ability, and disillusionment about the possibility of ever being accepted on a par with white teachers. Chloe suggested that black students would 'never be given a distinction' or 'accepted as being equal to white students' because they are not perceived as 'having the same ability as white people'. Gillborn (1995) contends that low teacher expectations can lead to unfair assessments and unequal treatment for black pupils. If the assessments some supervising class teachers make are informed by racialised preconceptions about black ability, how can they be expected to provide unbiased feedback to help them, or true assessments of their performance? These are issues for serious consideration by HEIs especially as class teachers play an important and powerful role in the supervision process. The negative attitudes held by such teachers can lead to despondency among black student teachers and possible drop out.

> Sometimes you get fed up of having to prove yourself. I'll see how it goes and do my probationary year, but I'm not optimistic. (Chloe)

> Now that they've changed the rules of having to do a probationary year I'm going to go abroad and teach. I am basically tired of society at the moment. Black teachers are not really appreciated. I don't want to go into a job and feel I'm not appreciated or respected. I want to experience what it's like to be respected as a black teacher. (Olive)

Fish suggests that, 'how the teacher sees teaching practice has a profound effect upon the process and progress of the practice ... it

becomes the baseline from which the rest follows and, is a key to the success or failure of the practice' (1989:168). From this assumption it follows that students can pass or fail not on their performance in the classroom, but as a consequence of the supervising class teacher's view of teaching practice and how the supervising class teacher sees her/his role as a supervisor. This can be taken a stage further to suggest that the supervising class teacher's views of the course (B.Ed/PGCE) the student is doing and her/his preconceptions of the abilities of students on such courses, can form an important part of the student experience and the teacher's assessment of the student's practice.

> My teacher told me she had a PGCE student last year and that she was appalling. The student used to come in crying and couldn't teach the class. ... The teacher was harping on the fact that I was a PGCE trainee. One day when a visitor came in she said: "Can you imagine, they are in school for, how long have you been in school? Four weeks before and two days a week for fifteen weeks. They haven't spent much time in school have they?" She told me that I couldn't use scheme books with the class. "You are a trainee", she said: "You can't use that. I can use it because I have been teaching for eighteen years". I felt that she was constantly trying to put me down. (Rita)

Rita, already a qualified teacher, was only doing the PGCE to gain DFE recognition. Unfortunately, the class teacher's prior labelling and pre-conceptions of PGCE student teachers became a self fulfilling prophecy. Rita failed to set the parameters of behaviour which

would have helped her to establish control in the classroom. This reinforced the teacher's opinion of PGCE student inability. Classroom control (Goodman, 1985) is of paramount importance for any teacher but part of Rita's problem was due to the fact that the class teacher undermined her status within the classroom. For example,

> I told them if they did not sit still and do their work, I would ask them to sit next to Mrs. Sparrow. She was in the class and she said: "No Mrs. Lark you can't do that".

Winstanley (1992) has suggested that student teachers are denied access to classroom reality when supervisors provide extra support which is otherwise absent in normal everyday teaching, as this leads to the development of a dependency model in teaching. There is no evidence that Rita was becoming dependent on the class teacher. On the contrary it would appear that she only wanted to affirm her position with the children and to reassure herself that additional support would be provided if necessary. In the previous practice the class teacher had volunteered additional support. Mrs. Sparrow on the other hand, undermined Rita's authority in front of the children by continually interrupting the lesson, shouting at her and correcting teaching methods which Rita had acquired at Rosehall.

> I was doing a language lesson and I had written some words on the blackboard. I asked this child to read, who was very good at reading. He misread the words. It wasn't a serious error. He said: "tripped" instead of "trapped". It was just a simple mistake but she stopped me and shouted: "Excuse me Mrs. Lark this

child made two mistakes and you just let it pass!" ... She was trying to make a big issue out of nothing.

These attitudes probably come close to the attacker/defender model of supervision whereby the teacher sets out to prove that the student 'has or has not mastered teaching' (Fish, 1989:171). Stones argues, that 'unless the relationship between supervisor and the supervised is one of trust and respect, the process of supervision is unlikely to achieve much' (1984:27; see also Kremer-Hayon, 1991). In this teaching practice there was no professional respect for the student teacher. In fact the practice was a total disaster. If Rita's College supervisor had not alerted the deputy headteacher as to the classroom dynamics between Rita and the class teacher, then Rita would certainly have failed her practice, especially as the class teacher felt that Rita had 'lost all credibility'. To all intents and purposes Rita did not fit into the class teacher's schema of thinking and Rita's practice demonstrated as much.

Unsatisfactory teaching practices may be due to the student's failure to meet the required standard, or an inappropriate match between supervising class teacher and student in terms of teaching philosophy and personality (Duquette, 1994). We do not know the particular reasons for placing Rita with this supervisor or whether the supervisor's views related specifically to PGCE students, but if we return to Zeichner's (1980) conception of the role of the supervising class teacher we notice that the teacher is required to be supportive and give guidance. The themes of nurturing, growth and development underpin this view and are bolstered by constructive criticism. Constructive criticism is part of the process of developing

effective classroom practice. Rita's supervising class teacher fulfilled none of these requirements. In addition, she was neither sympathetic to Rita's needs nor tolerant of her mistakes (Furlong et al., 1988). Instead she complained about Rita's lack of ability whilst denying her the opportunity to demonstrate her competence as a teacher. Rita was, according to the class teacher, only capable of 'changing the classroom backing paper', 'taking out and putting away the PE apparatus' and doing what she described as 'all those foreign things', for example, exploring so-called 'ethnic' foods with the black children in the class. The teacher's derisory comments helped to undermine Rita's ability and perpetuate the viewpoint of the pupil quoted earlier, that black teachers are merely 'helper's not teachers'. Despite these difficulties Rita successfully completed her practice with another class teacher. As she said,

> this teacher treated me the way I would expect anyone to treat another human being.

The supervising teacher's perceptions of Rita's supposed teaching role demonstrates that some teachers have a limited view of student teacher ability. The teacher's negative attitudes also help to illustrate that teachers who are 'experts in the facilitation of pupil learning' (Maclellan, 1994:72) do not always have the ability to train teachers. All this has implications for the ways in which HEIs and schools ensure that the teachers who are chosen for the supervision of black students are actually able to achieve that end. The supervising class teacher's lack of recognition of Rita's status and teaching ability also point towards the necessity for some form of negotiation between HEI, school and student as to expectations, levels of possible

support and the need to acknowledge the status of the student within the classroom. If the student teacher is not granted due respect this may result in disruptive pupil behaviour and an ineffectual teaching practice experience for the student.

The role of college supervision

According to Proctor (1993) ITE supervisors should be able to observe and analyse students' teaching approaches in a variety of situations and, identify strategies to help them develop professional competence and facilitate pupil learning. However, ITE supervisors are examiners before they are supervisors (Ralph, 1994; Fish, 1989). One of the difficulties faced by assessing supervisors is that they only get a brief opportunity to observe a student teacher at work. It is not possible for them to observe a student for the entirety of her/his placement because of the number of students assigned to them (Maclellan, 1994; Furlong et al., 1988). They therefore rely heavily on the class teacher's assessment to make a more informed judgement. If the teacher's assessment is poor, then the College supervisor's report will reflect that. For example, the teacher's statement that, 'during the first week of the teaching practice Olive was enthusiastic but her enthusiasm died by the end of the second week', was cited in the College supervisor's report as 'evidence' of Olive's 'unsuitability for primary teaching'. Primary teaching, as Olive was informed, needed 'lively and enthusiastic' teachers. There are also occasions when College supervisors make their decisions without consulting the opinions of the class teacher who observes the student daily.

I remember one day we were talking about grades and the supervisor was talking about different grades like, pass, good pass and distinction and within the first week she had circled the 'pass'. Yet on my second TP I had a really good report.

(Yula)

It may be routine to assume a 'pass' at the beginning of a teaching practice, but if there is no dialogue with students which helps them understand the procedures and processes of assessment, they are likely to believe that they have been unfairly assessed. This is particularly true when assessments are made without taking account of the kind of class allocated to the student.

I thought it couldn't get any worse. In my class I had ten or eleven children with behavioural and emotional problems. So the whole class was totally chaotic. The first week I couldn't control them. They were so disruptive. Other staff told me it was the worst class in the school. The class teacher sympathised with me and told me to start from the beginning and re-establish myself. I did that and established some ground rules, not the class teacher's rules but my own. After that it was ok. I thought I was going to get a 'good pass' because my class teacher told me that I was a 'good pass' student. But when I saw my supervisor she said: "Don't worry about anything you're definitely going to pass". At the time I was thinking 'What do you mean I'm going to pass? I'm a 'good pass' student'. All the other practices I had had very good reports. I felt I deserved to get more than just a 'pass'....

> My class teacher said it was unfair because she thought I was a 'good pass' student. (Naomi)

Despite Naomi's proven ability to manage a disruptive class, the College supervisor's initial low expectations of her did not change in her final assessment. She disregarded the recommendations of the HMI and class teacher who both considered Naomi a 'good pass' student. It would appear that ITE supervisory assessments are sometimes made too early, before students have had the opportunity to establish themselves in the classroom and develop their practitioner skills. Such early prognosis of student ability can lead to unfair assessment. This would seem to be another issue that the HEI can consider in setting up a working partnership with schools.

For whatever reason, it has been necessary at times for Rosehall to ask B.Ed supervisors to assess PGCE students during teaching practice. This is not always beneficial to PGCE students as they are subjected to different expectations of classroom practice. For example,

> The first time the supervisor visited it was: "Have you taught the whole class yet?" I said: "Yes, but my teacher wants to be in touch with the children everyday". Then there was a question of writing in the exercise books which went on for three weeks. He insisted that I take over completely. My teacher would let me do everything apart from commenting in the children's exercise books. She felt strongly about doing that side of things. This continued until I discussed the matter with my personal tutor. I explained the whole situation and he

asked me if I was taking the whole class. By then it was week four and I was. I told him that if the teacher did not want me commenting in the exercise books I would not insist because in the end it was her class. I did not want all my hard work to go down the drain because I did not mark the children's work. He spoke to my supervisor who did not question it anymore. (Meleta)

It may be argued that the above expectations of the College supervisor were reasonable as they point to a more realistic picture of actual classroom teaching. However, the wishes of the supervising class teacher together with the nature of student assessment by classroom teachers would need to be taken into consideration by HEI supervisors in their own assessment of the student.

Over a four year period B.Ed students have time to develop their classroom skills and professional competence. PGCE students on the other hand have only a few months in which to establish themselves. The length of the PGCE course makes it is essential that mistakes or inappropriate practices are rectified instantly (Furlong et al., 1988). To illustrate this point the experience of one student will be drawn on.

PGCE students are expected to complete two block practices, four and six weeks respectively. If they fail either practice it has to be repeated before they can be awarded their certificate. Jasmine, another student seeking DFE recognition, was told on the last day of the PGCE course that she had failed her second practice and ultimately the course. Jasmine was surprised at her failure because

she had deduced from her College (B.Ed) supervisor's comment (after observations of her practice) that she should keep working hard and she would be alright. This is not to suggest however, that Jasmine's practice was perfect. It was intimated that Jasmine did not have enough activities to occupy the children so they became 'bored and easily distracted', and that she had difficulty in 'establishing herself in the class'. Jasmine enquired if she ought to go on. She was advised that if she worked hard in the highlighted areas there was no reason why she should not succeed. With these weaknesses 'remedied' Jasmine was informed that she was 'doing well'. During the fourth week a second opinion was sought as a precaution. The second opinion, provided by a PGCE supervisor, confirmed that there was 'nothing to worry about' and Jasmine was left with the impression that she was going to pass.

In trying to account for the difficulties she at first encountered Jasmine attributed her weaknesses to a number of areas which she outlined.

i) Fifteen of the children were Standard Assessments Tasks (SAT's) children that were withdrawn at various times with no prior warning. Obviously this was disruptive to my organisation and planning and was very unsettling for the children.

ii) The class teacher normally had a Section 11 teacher supporting her for two and a half days per week, plus parent support for one morning per week. This support was withdrawn when I commenced my teaching practice.

iii) Because my class teacher was busy with SAT's there was little time for discussion with her either at the beginning or end of the day. She also left early because of family commitments.

If students are to make the most of their teaching practice opportunities they need 'time to discuss their practice' with their class teacher (Sidgwick et al., 1993:105). Jasmine's remarks indicate that the classroom demands placed on her supervising teacher made it difficult for such time to be made available. Consequently, Jasmine did not benefit from her class teacher's expertise.

Jasmine's experience highlights a series of flaws. First the College supervisor's failure to recognize the difficulties as highlighted by Jasmine. Jasmine's difficulties were undoubtedly compounded by the withdrawal of the class support teacher. Secondly, once the supervisor realised that she was indeed a 'fail' student this should have been made clear to her and spelt out in the interim report that she received. Thirdly, the school's final report made no mention of Jasmine's likely failure. During the final week of the practice the headteacher made the following comments.

> Jasmine, don't worry, you're going to be fine. You have worked hard and improved a tremendous amount. You got off to a bad start but this is what teacher training is all about. Mrs. Apricot is pleased with your performance.

Given that these comments were made towards the end of Jasmine's practice something disastrous would have had to occur for her to

fail. My own reading of Jasmine's report gave no indication of such a disaster having occurred. As Jasmine said,

> you have read my reports and things, they do not say anything in there do they? If you read my reports you are likely to think you are going through alright.

Jasmine's experience would seem to cast doubt on the effectiveness of PGCE supervision by B.Ed supervisors. The student appears to be caught in a triangular web of miscommunication between the B.Ed supervisor, the PGCE supervisor and the class teacher. A HMI survey of ITE recommended that during teaching practice students should be supervised by 'specialist tutors who are able to relate the progress and needs of the student to what is being provided - or needs to be provided' (1987:24). It is clear in Jasmine's case that the advice given did not relate to her needs, or what needed to be provided to improve her performance. If Jasmine was a 'fail' candidate both the school and College supervisors should have made this quite clear. Amongst the black B.Ed students there was also disquiet about the accuracy of the information they received, regarding their teaching ability, from supervising class teachers and College supervisors. The following examples illustrate that Jasmine's experience was by no means unique.

> They sort of humour you: "Carry on as you are, you're doing fine". But in the end they just give you a 'pass' which I don't think is right. (Bev)

I thought my college supervisor was writing all these nice things about me. She told me I was doing well, really well, but when it came to the crunch the result I got was rather disappointing - just a 'pass'. I thought I was doing really well but as far as she were concerned I wasn't. You've got to be very careful especially when you're on your final TP because you can end up failing completely. (Marsha)

What is particularly interesting about this case is that a white PGCE student who was at the same school as Jasmine was allowed by the same B.Ed supervisor to cease her teaching practice after three weeks. The student informed Jasmine that she had been given additional time to 'better prepare herself' for the completion of her teaching practice in September. She was clearly given adequate assistance to prevent her failure. Jasmine was not offered an explanation as to why she had not been accorded the same treatment, but it did leave her with the overwhelming feeling that 'black students are treated differently'. Moreover it does seem to support the view that underachievement and failure are associated with blackness. Wright (1987) found that black pupils were denied educational opportunities because of the 'faulty assessments' white teachers made of their abilities and achievements. In this study it would appear that inappropriate teacher and College supervision contributed to the underachievement and failure of some black students. Since the purpose of teaching practice and supervision is to develop professional skills and produce competent teachers, giving students the impression that they are 'doing well' when they are not, only serves to disadvantage them.

They (class and college supervisor) kept saying things like: "This is good, you're doing fine, you're doing really well". They didn't draw my attention to any of my weaknesses until the very end - after my TP. How could I work on my bad points if they kept telling me everything was ok? (Yasmin)

Ideologies of racism, so frequently perpetuated in education have helped to stereotype black people as 'unintelligent'. Black pupils are considered slow to conceptualise and learn; 'low/under achievers' (see for example, Mirza, 1992; Troyna, 1991; Swann, 1985). If the framework through which black student teachers are assessed by white teachers/supervisors is one informed by a belief in black people having a lower academic ability than whites, then black students, in spite of their actual performance, will be judged as 'low achievers'. In accordance with such low expectations black students who are told that they are 'doing well' when they are not, may actually be considered by their supervisors to be 'doing well' within the context of being black. If these inaccurate understandings of black ability are not questioned and are then applied by people who are in positions of power, and this in turn forms the basis of the relationship supervisors have with black students, then we can expect black students to continue to underachieve in ITE. Figueroa contends that, 'where racist or ethnicist frames of reference operate ... they can have an important impact on pupil development and performance' (1991:96). Under these circumstances black students may need to decipher what is meant by 'doing well' if they are to succeed in ITE. Jasmine's experience like those of her peers illustrates a fundamental need to question and reflect upon the role and purpose of supervision.

GENDER

We have so far seen how 'race' influences to a large extent the way black women experience teaching practice. Such experiences formed a pattern, regardless of the ethnic background of the black women. In their experiences of gender however, two South Asian women felt their experiences were different. They suggested that South Asian boys reacted differently towards them during teaching practice because of their gender. Unfortunately, neither student could provide an explanation as to why this was and the experiences they highlighted did not shed any further light on the children's behaviour.

> When I first went there, some of the boys who were nine years old, would not talk to me unless they had to. I remember thinking this is really embarrassing, but it changed whilst I was there. (Muna)

> A few of the boys seemed to resent the fact that I was in the class. One boy in particular was evidently uneasy. He could not pinpoint what it was exactly that he resented about me, but there was definitely something. I asked him a couple of times what was wrong but he would not say. (Gita)

The students' youthful appearance may have been a factor influencing the attitude of some of the boys. One child said: "You look too young to be a teacher, Miss". The children were used to being taught by older teachers. If age was not a contributory factor, it is possible that the pupils were bewildered by the fact that they were

being taught by a South Asian teacher. The pupils in both classes were predominantly South Asian. Muna's supervising class teacher had informed her that it was, 'the first time the children had been taught by a black teacher'.

It is noticeable that while the students' felt their gender was the cause of their different experience, the teacher's of both classes were female. As the children were used to being taught by mature women teachers one wonders if these boys would have behaved any differently to young black male teachers, or male teachers per se. Without observation this is difficult to ascertain. As single variables age, gender and 'race' may have been insignificant, but the interaction of all three may have contributed to some of the difficulties Muna and Gita experienced with these children.

Although the behaviour of the boys in Muna's class changed, at the end of her practice she was still unsure as to why they had 'suddenly decided to talk' to her. She suggested that in addition to her gender the children's initial behaviour was due to their shyness. It could be argued, however, that some children may view two adults in their class with authority over them as one too many. So they would attempt to show their resentment by being indifferent to the new teacher. It is not unknown for pupils to 'try it on' with a new and in particular, a student teacher. To avoid such behaviour some headteachers prefer that pupils are not informed of the status of the teacher joining the class.

> The school has a policy that when students come in they pretend that you are a visiting teacher so that the kids treat

you as a qualified teacher, as opposed to a student who they can play up. (Maureen)

Another explanation is offered by Sarah (1988) who states that student teachers tend to treat the behaviour of boys and girls differently. She believes this occurs because student teachers 'are generally more concerned with issues of control' (ibid:160). As a student teacher herself, Sarah found that she focused on the misbehaviour of boys while she 'practically ignored all the girls who were getting on with their work' (ibid:160). Following on from this, it could be argued that Muna and Gita's own classroom behaviour could have caused these boys to react in the way that they did. Sarah (1988) points out that the act of constantly reprimanding boys for their misbehaviour can have the effect of reinforcing their assertiveness. Although Muna and Gita did not suggest that these boys were particularly disruptive, it is possible that the boys chose to take a 'silent' rather than an 'assertive' approach to highlight their disapproval of the attitude displayed towards them, and that when the attitude of Muna and Gita changed, so did theirs. As Muna says, 'they suddenly decided to talk to me'. (The notion of teachers treating boys and girls differently is explored further in chapter five - see also; Sikes, 1993; Skelton and Hanson, 1989; Spender, 1988).

From student interviews it was evident that only Muna and Gita were conscious of gender in their teaching practice experiences. However, as previously stated, they were unable to put forward any specific reasons for the non-responsiveness of the boys in their individual classes. This is not to dismiss the women's claim - gender may well have been the root cause of the children's behaviour - but

to highlight the women's own uncertainty as to the underlying cause of their different experience. As both students successfully completed their teaching practice it is safe to assume that their respective class and College supervisor's did not consider the 'lack of communication' between themselves and the boys as cause for concern. There was no indication of gender relationships being a difficulty in either teaching practice report.

The lack of gender examples cited by the women in this study does not mean that gender was not a significant factor or that did it not feature in their teaching practice experiences. It could be argued that the reason gender was not highlighted or it was not considered by the other women to be an important factor was because 'race' overshadowed all their other teaching practice experiences. This suggestion seems to have been borne out by the fact that Muna and Gita only associated pupil behaviour with their gender during one teaching practice. In the following chapter it will be seen that gender can be a dominant factor in some black women's teaching experiences.

RELIGION

There were a variety of religious beliefs amongst the women I interviewed, but as with gender, religion was rarely specified as being a factor in their teaching practice experiences.

The feast of Ramadan occurred at the same time as one of Zaria's teaching practices. One of the conditions of celebrating Ramadan is that Muslims are expected to fast for the whole period. In observance

of this rule Zaria was allowed to absent herself from the staffroom at lunch and play times. Ordinarily students were expected to integrate with the rest of the staff.

> I was mainly in the classroom all day. At lunch time I was busy doing my displays or marking work. When I returned home I worked on my file and planned lessons for the next day. (Zaria)

Despite the strain of fasting Zaria argued that her teaching experience was made more enjoyable through the acceptance of her beliefs by the school. Other schools also demonstrated their commitment to plurality by allowing her to take the occasional day off to celebrate religious festivals.

Zaria wore trousers at college and during teaching practice. She commented that it was against her religion to wear skirts or dresses, and that although schools appeared to have an informal policy of female staff wearing skirts or dresses, no-one had actually told her that she was not allowed to wear trousers. The expectations of Zaria's religion might be viewed by some as yet another example of how patriarchy serves to control some women's lives (see chapter two). However, Zaria did not feel constrained or controlled by her religion. She had always modified her attire to suit herself while still demonstrating commitment to her religious beliefs. In fact her religion had never prevented her from doing anything that she wanted to (see for example, Knott and Khokher, 1993). If anything it was how others perceived Islam that caused her 'the most difficulty'.

Another student explained that she found herself placed in a conflicting situation because her own religious beliefs were opposed to those of the children she taught.

> Most of the school is Muslim and they celebrated everything Muslim. One of the children cornered me and informed me that he calls God 'Allah'. "What do you call him?" he asked. I could not contradict him so I just said: "I call him God". He said: "Do you worship statues?" I did not realise what he meant, then he said: "Jesus is a statue". Because he is Muslim his parents had never told him that the statues were symbolic. I had to explain that to him. He just walked off and said: "My mom says you worship statues". So I try to bring my religion in as little as possible. (Gita)

Irrespective of religious persuasion, the main crux of the problem for students whose specialism is not religion is that they find that such as the above. Gita felt that if she had contradicted the child's beliefs and his mother's expressed opinion, it might have been construed by the child's family or the school that she was imposing her own judgement on his way of life. She was also of the opinion that if she had brought her own beliefs into the discussion then this might have been taken as being offensive, that is, that she thought her religion more superior or that she was attempting to indoctrinate the pupils.

This example highlights a more important difficulty which would need to be addressed by HEIs when placing students in particular

schools. This student was allocated to this school through 'colour matching'. It was assumed that because she was of the same skin colour as the children she would teach that she would be accepted by the children as a positive role model. There was no attempt by Rosehall College to help Gita or other students explore some of the differences they were likely to encounter in schools. Although the practice itself was enjoyable and the student willingly participated in the different religious festivities, she felt unable to extend the religious educational development of the children, who at ten and eleven years old, were already well informed about the religion which played a major role in their lives. Far from being a positive role model, Gita suggested that she was viewed as 'inferior', someone the children 'did not want to emulate' because her beliefs were alien to theirs. The aim of presenting positive black role models to black pupils was perhaps not best served by this particular school allocation.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Although these black women's teaching practice experiences occurred as individualised instances, the pattern of their experiences indicates that 'race' underpins all aspects of black women's teaching practice experiences. A major problem for black students would seem to be their struggle to overcome stereotypes and be accepted as teachers. The research highlighted that for black students, the classroom is a site of struggle, with contestations emerging in the main around 'race'. Yet student teachers are taught to 'view schooling as a neutral terrain devoid of power and politics'

(Giroux and McLaren, 1991:227). There seems to be little preparation for the fact that,

> classroom reality is ... socially constructed, historically determined, and reproduced through institutionalized relationships of class, gender, race and power (Giroux and McLaren, ibid:227).

It is against this background that prospective black student teachers must struggle if they are to succeed in teaching. Despite these difficulties and their dissatisfaction with their teaching practice experiences, these black women demonstrated an enormous capacity for survival in the classroom. As a whole their spirit and commitment to teaching was not dampened by the difficulties they encountered during teaching practice. The experiences of these black women and the strategies employed to counteract their negative experiences seems to bear out the view that only the 'fittest of the fittest' survive in teaching (McKellar, 1989).

The experiences highlighted in this chapter in relation to black student placement would also seem to indicate that 'colour matching' is fraught with difficulties. It is quite clear that whilst the aim behind this procedure is to present positive black role models to both black and white pupils and to challenge negative stereotypes wherever possible, it can actually create more problems for black students than it solves. The students discovered that the 'contact' hypothesis (Troyna, 1987) can endorse the very idea that black people are different from white people and reinforce the prejudices it seeks to combat. It is noticeable that regardless of whether these

women were placed in multi-ethnic or predominantly white schools for teaching practice, the majority of the schools were not equipped to 'effectively support' black students. The same point can be applied to the HEI. This is especially serious in view of the importance of practical experience in the development of professional competence. Although there may be an implicit intention to be fair to all students, notions of 'fairness' can conflict with the racial frameworks which inform supervisor's actions.

Blair and Bourdillon (forthcoming) consider the current period of reform in ITE as providing an ideal opportunity for HEIs and schools to consider their partnership arrangements, their responsibilities and their approaches to teacher training. Similarly, Siraj-Blatchford (1995) sees school-based training as offering 'new challenges' to HEIs and schools. The experiences highlighted in this chapter would seem to suggest that one of the main challenges would be how best HEIs and schools can 'effectively support' black students during teaching practice. According to a HMI report on teacher education, the success of school-based training depends on the 'quality of support and guidance provided by practising classroom teachers' (1992:3). If black students' are to be enabled to develop their teaching skills and acquire professional competence, supportive and positive teaching environments are considered important.

Black students undoubtedly are entitled to a racism-free and supportive teaching practice experience. However, as racism is a 'dynamic and complex facet of school life in which routine institutional procedures and teacher expectations may be deeply implicated' (Gillborn, 1995:36), it is likely that black student teachers

will continue to have negative experiences in schools if staff given responsibility for their supervision are not competent in this task, and, more importantly, if teachers are unable to implement antiracist strategies in their training of prospective black teachers. It is worth noting that the existing culture of racism (Gillborn, 1995; Rattansi, 1992) in British schools may blind schools to the fact that some students are not treated equally during teaching practice. This would seem to be an issue for consideration by HEIs and schools in their partnership arrangements, especially if placements based on ethnicity or skin colour are to provide an effective challenge to racism and enable black students to develop professional competence.

This research further indicates that we cannot be safe in the knowledge that the so-called 'safe' schools chosen by HEIs for teaching practice experience will respond to the needs of black students unless clear criteria are drawn up as to what constitutes a 'safe' school, the criteria for student placement are clearly negotiated, rules of communication are discussed and roles and expectations of different participants are established. Effective communication and continuous dialogue between HEIs and schools would help to combat, if not avoid, some of the problems that have been highlighted in this chapter.

In the following chapter I examine the first year teaching experiences of the black women student teachers who qualified as teachers during the course of the research.

CHAPTER 5

NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS: THE FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I focus on the first year, post-qualifying teaching experiences of the black women in my study. The intention is to see if there are any changes in experience once black women move from being student to practitioner. In the first part, I look at how they choose the schools where they will work, how they are perceived in these schools, and the relationships they have with white parents. I also explore the roles which they adopt as qualified teachers. In the second half of the chapter I examine in detail the experiences of one teacher. Through the case study approach I intend to illustrate the specific ways in which the experience of practising black teachers is gendered and racialized.

PART 1

Choosing schools

The choice of school for black women teachers appears to be a complex issue. Although one might assume that as black people, black teachers would wish to begin their teaching careers in multi-ethnic schools, this was not the case for the majority of the women in this study. Most opted for predominantly or all white schools. I shall begin by outlining the reasons given by two of the women for choosing to teach in multi-ethnic schools. This will be followed by

an examination of why such schools were rejected by the rest of the women.

Black women teachers would like to believe that their skills would be readily welcomed in any school, but their experiences in their teaching practice schools lead some to the view that it is better to exclude predominantly or all white schools from their list of choices.

> I thought I would be better off in a multi-ethnic school because I would be more welcomed and accepted. (Ranjit)

> I thought it would be better to have non white teachers who could support me and who would be willing to discuss things with me. (Marsha)

As a PGCE student Ranjit's experiences of teaching practice were minimal. However, the impact of these experiences was enormous. They left her disillusioned about teaching in all white schools. Ranjit contrasted her experiences of white pupil racism during one teaching practice with those of the attitudes of South Asian children in another. Her decision to seek employment in mainly South Asian schools was influenced by the following factors.

> Asian children react differently to me when they see me. With the Asian children I always see a sparkle in their eyes. I do not know why but I think they see somebody that they can relate to, someone who understands them. The white children I have come across so far have had so much hatred for black people in their hearts that they did not care what they said, or

if it would hurt you. I did not want to have to deal with their racism daily. I wanted to be with pupils who I felt wanted me to be there and were willing to work with me. (Ranjit)

Ranjit was concerned that she was more likely to experience conflict in predominantly white schools than in multi-ethnic ones and that this would prevent her establishing a working relationship with the pupils. This anxiety was shared by other black women teachers. However, despite these anxieties, most of the women rejected multi-ethnic schools primarily because they did not want to be labelled as the *'black teacher for black children'*. Such 'colour matching' may have some positive elements to it but these black teachers were anxious to avoid becoming de-skilled in other areas of the curriculum, by, for example, being given responsibility for teaching multicultural education or for Section 11 posts. It was suggested earlier that there was a tendency for black teachers to be stereotyped negatively in this way, and that this type of viewpoint contributed to a belief that black teachers are best suited to schools with high ratios of black pupils. Despite their expressed preference for teaching in predominantly and all white schools these women were aware of the difficulties they might face in such schools. Some feared that they might be accused of favouring the few black pupils that were there, especially if they seemed to be paying attention to the specific needs of the black children and, if they were consulted on the behaviours or learning abilities of black pupils, their possible support of black pupils might also be taken as confirmation of their favouritism for black children.

I would be happy to try to explain why for example a black child might not be able to understand such and such. But you see if you start to do that I feel that some white people will then label you, 'oh she's the black teacher and she's pro black'. (Maureen)

Seeking the expert opinions of black teachers might also lead to the conclusion by white teachers that black teachers are 'professional ethnics' and that they should be used in this way.

The negative attitudes displayed by a number of supervising teaching practice staff in predominantly white schools led some of the black teachers to conclude that, *'if they could teach in these schools they could teach anywhere'*. However, there was a feeling amongst the group that even though many had proved that they could 'cope with' racism, they would still have to prove themselves as being competent practitioners to a wider white audience. All newly qualified teachers have to demonstrate their teaching competence to a wider audience, but these black teachers believed that if they were to be accepted (by white parents and teachers) on an equal basis with white teachers they would have to demonstrate their competence in mainly or all white schools. Although they did not relish the notion of being the token black teacher, they nevertheless felt that predominantly white schools would not only present them with a challenge, but the opportunity to prove their professional competence.

I love challenges and I saw teaching in an all white school as a challenge. I could have gone into a school which is

predominantly black but I feel that you have to prove yourself. That is prove that you are as good as anybody. I mean white teachers. I did not want to be seen as a multicultural teacher. This is how many black teachers are perceived because they tend to teach in multi-ethnic schools, or have responsibility for this type of post. I did not want to go to a school just because I am black. I wanted to be seen as a teacher capable of teaching anybody, black or white. People say: "Oh do you teach your own kind then?" I did not want to get into that. I wanted to be seen as someone who could teach, whether it's white or black children, that I can actually teach. For the first year after completing my degree at least I felt I had to prove that I could teach in white schools. I will eventually go and teach in a multi-ethnic school because I believe that's where I should be to help black children and be a role model to them. But for the first year I had to prove my capability in a white school. (Ella)

Just as teaching practice was a test of whether they could put theory into practice these black teachers felt that teaching in predominantly and all white schools would enable them to more effectively discard the label of the 'professional ethnic', and the assumption that black teachers were best suited for teaching black children. They doubted that headteachers would recognize the emotional restraint which they would inevitably have to exercise when faced with racism, let alone value this quality as a professional skill. In that respect it was unlikely that such skills would be rewarded when scale promotions were being made.

They were aware that as black teachers they were under intense scrutiny to prove themselves. They were also under no illusion about the added obstacles they were likely to face.

> I know I am going to have a problem in this school because it's an all white school in a very middle-class area. The head told me that the school was looking at different faiths and that one of the parent's withdrew her son from an Eid assembly. She said: "I don't want my son exposed to that". I'm the first black person to go and teach at this school so a lot will be expected of me. I know that a lot of pressure will be put on me by those who do not want a black teacher in the school, but I have confidence in myself. I think that that will help me because I can present a positive image of Asians. I believe that I have a role in this particular school but I'm sure I'll get a few bricks thrown. (Rita)

All newly qualified teachers have fears about the new post they are going to occupy, but the racist assumptions often associated with black teachers' competence presents challenges not faced by their white colleagues.

<u>White perceptions of black teachers</u>

I stated above that these black teachers regarded predominantly and all white schools as providing a test of their skills. What they were unable to predict was the exact manner in which they would have to prove themselves.

They (parents) did not say anything but you could tell from the way they looked at you that they were asking themselves: "What is she doing here?" (Chloe)

I had a phone call from the head asking me to come and meet the parents of the children I would be teaching. I went in and she said: "This is Mrs. Plum who will be taking your children". It was just the way they looked. I did not feel comfortable at all. So when it came to coffee time I decided that this would be the point at which I win or lose. One or two of the parents had brought their children so I sat with the children while I drank my coffee and in the end one parent came over to me and said: "You've won the children's approval". I think they will give you a chance if you are ok with the children. (Meleta)

You know the children were embarrassed at first because they had a black teacher. They went home and told their parents that their teacher didn't have the same colour as them. They found it very difficult to accept me as a teacher. (Maureen)

These prejudiced attitudes indicate that black teachers have many hurdles to overcome before they can actually begin their quest to prove themselves competent teachers. The idea that being black somehow means that black teachers are not 'real' teachers, or that they have a specific remit to teach black children only, creates doubt and apprehension in some white parents about the role black teachers will play in school. This is especially so if white parents have no previous experience of black teachers.

When I started at the school I had a couple of parents come in just to see how I talked. They wanted to make sure that their children were being taught proper English. So they came in. They found it very difficult to accept me. One parent said: "Are you going to be teaching the black children?" They think you are there just to teach the black children and there were only two. The parents are ... I do not know how you would describe them, they are arrogant. They have got certain expectations of black teachers. They obviously do not see black people as being middle-class or as being able to teach their children. (Ella)

When I first started the children's parents came in to see what I was like. They also tried to find out what I was like from another teacher. I had lots of letters from parents, for example, one parent wrote that her child had not slept for a couple of days and that her daughter was afraid of me. I do not know why she was afraid because I wasn't speaking a foreign language. The class that are coming up to me next year, their teacher has told me that some of the parents have been asking her questions about me. For instance what I'm like. I said to her: "Tell them that I bite". I mean what do they think, that I bite, that I am an animal? That's what you get from white middle-class parents. (Rita)

The reception that black teachers receive from white parents may in part be due to the general perception of newly qualified and inexperienced teachers (see for example, Winstanley, 1992). Student accounts, however, point strongly to skin colour rather than

inexperience as the basis of their discomforting treatment by white parents.

It is noticeable that the uncertainty surrounding black teachers is not class based or confined to those teachers in predominantly white schools.

> All the children are Pakistani or Bengali. I only have four white children in my class. There are twelve in the whole school. One of the white children in the class told me his mom had said that she hoped he wouldn't have Miss Narcisse (another Indian teacher in the school) in the September. I asked him why because Miss Narcisse is very good. "I don't know", he said. "My mom doesn't like her." I said: "She doesn't know her. How can anyone not like someone they have not met?" "I don't know Miss, but she said." He worried until the day I said: "You're going to have Mrs. Primrose". I thought it was strange ... but perhaps they don't like having two Asian teachers in a row. (Ranjit)

Although this parent's anxiety was not directed at Ranjit it did confirm her earlier suspicions that white parents and staff have a tendency to question the capabilities of black teachers. Ranjit had assumed that by working in a majority South Asian school she would escape prejudicial attitudes. However, the above excerpt illustrates that even though white parents send their children to multi-ethnic schools this does not mean that they do not hold negative views of black teachers.

The relationship between white parents and black teachers

There are different ways of viewing parental involvement in schools. They could be viewed as 'consumers' (David, 1993; Munn, 1993), 'partners' (Bastiani, 1993) or concerned parents who are able to contribute something to children's learning. The parents referred to below by Meleta and Rita presumably viewed themselves as 'consumers' with a right to question if they were not satisfied with the service given. According to Rita, the market-oriented approach to education and the notion of parental choice means that headteachers will make ill-considered decisions in order to appease parental wishes. The following examples illustrate Rita and Meleta's view of headteachers succumbing to parental demands.

> You know instead of coming to me one of the mother's went to another teacher and complained that her child was finding the school very difficult and that the other children were on reading books and she wasn't. The headmistress then came and said to me: "Can you give the child a book?" When I started at the school I would have put all of the children on books, but I was told that the school's policy is that they should know all of their level one words by 'look and say', before they can actually be given books. I was following that policy but I had to bend the rules to accommodate this child because her mother complained. Since that day it's as if you just have to give in. The headmistress said: "Look just to keep the mother quiet, give the child a book". I said: "What if she comes to a book that she struggles on?" "Meleta she keeps the book until she knows it. But we won't tell her mother." (Meleta)

> Horace's mom used to come in a lot complaining to the head that he couldn't read, that I wasn't hearing him read enough. And do you know that the head heard him read three times a week on top of the reading I was already doing with him because of his mother's complaint. ... Here with parental pressure the head bends over backwards. He likes to please the parents. He will tell you not to bend over backwards for the parents, but he does. He won't get their support if he doesn't. The parents have too much say, so much say that they interfere. (Rita)

Throughout a child's life there are likely to be many teaching situations which may conflict with the wishes of parents but, unlike middle-class parents, working-class parents do not always have the 'cultural capital' and 'power' to transfer those wishes into action. Middle-class parents in particular understand the workings of the education system and know how to secure the best advantages for their children (Golby, 1993). The above examples demonstrate that they have the ability to seek and initiate change in the classroom. Despite this awareness Tomlinson (1991) has argued that parents do not have a real power base as they are not a funded body. Nevertheless, it is clear that middle-class parents can be very influential in schools. According to David (1993) the ability of parents to initiate change lies in the 1988 Education Reform Act which gives them 'choice' over schools and a say, through governing bodies, in the financial and educational management of schools. However, it has been shown that 'choice' for parents is largely confined to white middle-class parents (Ball et al., 1995; Blair, 1994; Verma and Neasham, 1990). The ability of white (in particular

middle-class) parents to exercise their rights can be threatening to black teachers who feel that they are under constant surveillance to meet the (at times) unreasonable expectations of white parents.

> I had a parent who came in to help as a parent helper. She's a PE teacher and when she had finished doing PE with the children she asked if she could hear some of them read. Afterwards when I went to have a chat with her she said: "I went to DC (a private school) took a book out of their library scheme and asked my son to read it". She was trying to see whether I had pushed her child hard enough. Then she said: "He read it and I must admit that when I went back to DC and found out what sort of child would read that sort of book, they said if he was at their school he would be one of the top readers, and that's a compliment to you". Can you imagine if the result had been otherwise? She would definitely have reported me to the head. (Meleta)

It could be argued that white parents doubts of the ability of black teachers to educate their children adequately is the result of lingering theories of black intellectual inferiority propounded by scientific racists of the nineteenth century (see for example, Ashrif, 1992; Thorp, 1992), and endorsed by theorists such as Eysenck (1971) and Jensen (1969) in the twentieth century. Another explanation is offered by Jones (1991) who suggests that the 1988 Education Reform Act encourages parents to become 'vigilantes' of education, that is, 'to chide, and complain' (cited by Tomlinson, 1991:4). The implementation of recent legislation has undoubtedly made teachers more accountable to parents, but parents also have the right to

question the type of schooling that their child receives and the ability of the teacher in charge of the class, even if it causes distress to the teacher concerned. For example,

> It was parents' evening and one parent gave the impression that it was my fault his daughter was no longer enthusiastic about school. He said: "Oh Likki's changed, last year she was not like this"... We were only half way through the first term and he had begun to say things like that. I was so angry that I spoke to the head about it. The fact that I'm her present teacher you have got to take it personally haven't you? Likki's father hadn't bothered to find out what was wrong he just started accusing me. When I spoke to Likki about her attitude change she told me that nothing had changed it was just that she didn't always want to talk about her school work when she went home. She was growing up that was all. (Maureen)

Winstanley (1992) notes that parents tend to question the ability of young newly qualified teachers to teach their children. However, the black teachers I interviewed felt that judgements which were made about them by white parents, were often made as a direct result of doubts about their ability as black, rather than as inexperienced teachers. This view took hold as newly qualified white teachers in their schools did not encounter any of the questioning they did. As a result of such constant questioning, black teachers feel that their authority to make decisions and run their classrooms as they see fit is undermined. When white parents take their doubts about a black teacher to the headteacher instead of discussing them with the teacher directly, this only serves to reinforce the frustration these

black teachers feel at not being accepted on a par with white teachers.

> I've never heard any of my white colleagues complain that parents have gone straight to the headteacher before consulting them about concerns they may have about their child's progress. They usually ask the teacher to explain their methods first then they may go to the head if they are not happy with what they hear. But whenever it comes to me it's always the other way round. (Maureen)

It has been suggested that the increase in teacher accountability to parents would 'bring teachers and parents into a closer relationship' (Hargreaves, D. 1994:435). From the above responses it can be seen that there is some way to go before closer working relationships are developed between white parents and black teachers.

<u>Culture clash</u>

The discussion so far has centred on the perceptions white parents have of black teachers. It would appear that many parents hold prejudiced views about black teachers. In this section I examine the attitudes of two black teachers towards their teaching role and the role of parents in schools.

Rita and Meleta gained most of their educational experiences in Singapore and Ghana. Rita taught for eight years in Singapore before coming to Britain. This is the background that both teachers

brought to the teaching process in Britain and the context in which their perceptions of teaching and parents should be viewed.

Black teachers educated abroad had certain ideas about their own role and the 'place' of parents in schools. Their attitudes were influenced by their own experiences of parental involvement in schools abroad. Rita and Meleta suggested that in their respective countries there was a separation between home and school with defined rules and spaces for parents, children and teachers. Parents always observed the boundaries set. For example,

> Parents did not come into school unless invited. They were invited on Open days to see their children's work. They were welcome on sports days. Teachers were in full control. Parents held the teacher in high regard and trusted them. So there was no need for them to just drop in. If parents came in on other occasions it meant that their children had misbehaved or were not performing well. My father was very strict with regard to school work. He always wanted to make sure that I was performing to the best of my ability, but he would never just come into school and talk to my teachers. Even though he wanted to he would always wait until he was asked to come and speak to them. (Rita)

> In Ghana parents bring their children to school, they leave them at the school gate and go. At the end of the day they stand behind the gate and collect them. They see that the teacher is there to teach and they have faith in whoever is teaching their children. (Meleta)

Although parents knew their 'place' they also believed that teachers had their children's best interests at heart and would do everything to educate their children accordingly. In Britain there are no boundary lines drawn or barriers to keep parents out of schools. With the passing of the 1988 Education Reform Act parents have found school doors opened even wider to them. Parental involvement in British schools is welcomed as it is believed that this contributes to children's learning. It is also regarded by some as a 'prerequisite to effective schooling' (Saad, 1995:193). Rita and Meleta, like many teachers educated abroad viewed parents in their classrooms as 'intruders' who 'interfere' and conflict with the teacher's role (Donohoue-Clyne, 1993).

> At home there was no parental pressure. By pressure I mean there is no freedom for parents to come into the classroom. Parents could not approach you as and when they liked. Parents here have too much freedom to come into schools and question teaching practices. For example, "Why is my child not on level two books like the rest of the class?" They compare their child with other children and they expect the same for their child. They don't realise that s/he is an individual with different needs. One morning a parent came in to help and I had to say to her: "I don't think you should come in anymore", because it had taken her child six weeks to settle down to any form of work. I'm talking about putting pencil to paper. When she came in and I gave her son something to do, she would take it and do it for him. So I told her not to come in again and you wouldn't believe the child's work after that. He did so much more by himself. (Meleta)

It is argued that 'the class teacher system in primary schools gives each teacher enormous professional independence' (Hargreaves, D., 1994:424). Within the teaching profession as a whole classroom autonomy is considered fundamental (Broadfoot and Osborn, 1988; Hargreaves, 1972). As a result 'intrusions into the privacy of the classroom are resented' (Hargreaves, 1972:404). The attitudes of Rita and Meleta towards parental involvement in their classrooms need to be viewed in this context. However, whilst British parents may indeed have faith in the class teacher and believe that the teacher has the child's best interest at heart, Rita also considered parental intervention in the classroom - her domain - as being 'disrespectful'.

> The parents here are so bold. They will just walk into your class without knocking. They will tell you that they have come to see their child, collect a toy or something. They have no manners. I have told the children that the clasroom is like their home. It is a private place. People do not just walk into your home they have to be invited. (Rita)

The interpretation of parents' behaviour as disrespectful led Rita to believe that it was a contributory factor to the 'disrespect' children in her class had shown her. 'Children should be respectful, know who is in authority.' She thought them 'too pally with teachers - quite rude in that respect'. To maintain respect, children, like their parents should 'keep their distance'. Rita's philosophy on respect forms a major part of her conception of her teaching role. As a teacher she aims to create 'citizens for the world at large', so it is her responsibility 'to make sure that children go through school and life with the best values'. Being respectful and obedient to authority are

considered to be essential values for any citizen to acquire. Knowing one's 'place' and keeping one's distance, like the notions of establishing obedience and respect for authority, are reminiscent of nineteenth century middle-class ideas of educating working-class children. Working-class children were provided with the rudimentary basics which were just enough to ensure that they accepted their role and 'place' in life, and did not seek to rise above their station (Maguire and Weiner, 1994; see also Purvis, 1995 on the role of education for women). This view is largely at odds with contemporary teaching philosophies. There was therefore a conflict between Rita's teaching role in a British school and her view of parental involvement in children's education.

Rita and Meleta's interpretation of parental involvement as interference led them to believe that teachers who taught abroad were more respected than those in Britain. This was however, a minority view amongst the black women teachers. Although black teachers may not necessarily agree with some of the strategies that parents employ to gain access to the classroom and to ensure that their presence is felt, none of the other women regarded the British approach to parental involvement as being detrimental to the education of children. On the contrary, they believed that parents were able to make a positive contribution (Warham, 1993). Furthermore, there is nothing to suggest that the social distancing of parents that Rita and Meleta experienced abroad led to a better experience for those children. Indeed there was a danger that Rita's attitude might itself generate suspicion and doubt in white parents.

TEACHING ROLES

Roles assigned to black teachers

During the second term of her employment Maureen was offered the post of multicultural liaison officer. Maureen concluded that as she was the only black teacher at her school, that the headteacher thought her acceptance of this post would 'raise the profile of the school' and demonstrate that it was committed to multicultural education. The headteacher had assumed that because Maureen is black that she would willingly accept the position.

> One day the head came up to me and said: "Oh we've got this title spare, would you like to do it?" So I asked him what it was. He said: "It's a multicultural what have you". I said: "No I don't think that's for me really". So he said: "It's not because you're eh you know". He could not bring himself to say, because you're black. ... I felt the head had only wanted me to have the title because I am black. You see the title did not exist before I came to the school. I am not saying that he made up the title but he could have given it to anybody. In your first year you are not supposed to have any area at all. So why he chose to give it me in the first place I'll never know. The head's insistence that I take the post made me see red. I thought he was only giving it to me for one reason, and the only reason I could think of is the fact that I am darker than everybody else. I spoke to one of my colleagues and she reckoned that he only wanted me to have that title because I am black. That's

> the way I saw it too because I am the token black in the school. That's why I refused it. (Maureen)

The head's failure to create such a post in the school before Maureen arrived suggests that multicultural education had not been considered relevant or important, or something for which a white teacher could take responsibility. This example is one of several cited by the women which illustrates that in many schools black teachers, like black students, are expected to fulfil the 'professional ethnic' role.

As the only black teacher in her school Meleta found that her headteacher usually made a point of highlighting her presence to black parents whenever they came to the school.

> She always knocks on my door and says: "Do you know this person?" (Meleta)

The headteacher may genuinely have believed that this was a positive role for Meleta to play as it is not unknown for black parents to view the presence of black teachers in schools as essential to black pupil development.

> At parents' evening the black parents were very surprised to see me at the school. One of them smiled and said: "At least my son can look up to you as a black teacher now that you're here". (Marsha)

Meleta's headteacher may also have assumed that this was the only way to raise the profile of her only black staff member. However, Meleta was not equally introduced to white parents when they visited the school. In the previous chapter I highlighted these black women's rejection of the label 'black teacher' and their reasons for this. It would appear that the headteacher associated Meleta's professional role with her 'racial' identity. Meleta was unhappy that her headteacher chose to see her in this light and not just as a teacher. The headteacher may not have regarded Meleta's 'racial' identity as being more beneficial to teaching than her teaching skills, but this was Meleta's perception. Meleta cited the following example as further indication of the headteacher's conception of her role in the school.

> There was a black boy who had locked the dinner ladies out. He was just messing about. The head told him to sit in my classroom in order that I find out what had caused him to behave like that. She felt that as a black person I would be able to talk to him and see why he had refused to communicate with the rest of the staff. Uvanney, do you know that the child didn't refuse to talk to them it was the head who had said: "I'll get Mrs. Plum to talk to you". (Meleta)

It is evident that black pupils might more readily confide in a black teacher (see for example, East and Pitt, 1989; Osler, 1989) but the assumption here is that black teachers are the only ones who can communicate with black children because they share the same skin colour. It is worth pointing out that whilst 'race' may give one access to those with the same 'racial' identity it does not guarantee it (see

for example, Blair, 1995). Taking responsibility for black children is not a negative role for black teachers to adopt especially if they have previously established a rapport with the children. However, the same racial assumptions are not made of white teachers with regard to white children. Although Maureen rejected occupying what she perceived to be an 'ethnic' role in her school, Meleta on the other hand took up the challenge as she felt that the few black pupils who were there could benefit from a 'sympathetic ear'. Unfortunately, this type of approach not only supports the notion of 'black teachers for black children', but also reinforces the negative implications of such an association. It is the very kind of role which the other black women teachers were adamant that they did not want to occupy.

The racialization of Meleta's teaching role was evident in another respect. Although her 'racial' identity was considered important in the school's relations with black parents and in her capacity as the 'professional ethnic', it was considered unimportant when Meleta was invited to join a black teacher's association. In this situation the headteacher became concerned that Meleta was going to highlight her 'racial' identity by getting involved with the group.

> The head stood there waiting for me to open the letter. She wanted to know what was inside so I opened it. She said: "Oh Meleta does being black really affect you when you're teaching in a white school? I think it's often people's attitudes and how they see people because we are all prejudiced in some way. But given the fact that you get on so well with everyone here I don't really care that you're black and I wouldn't have

thought that your skin colour affects you". The head tried to convince me that I didn't need to bother joining the association because everyone is prejudiced anyway, and that emphasising my blackness wasn't the way to gain acceptance at school.

The headteacher was unconcerned and insensitive to Meleta's experiences of racism suggesting that everyone had to face some form of prejudice or another. She was unable to accept that black teachers might sometimes need the support of other black colleagues who have had similar experiences, or who have an understanding of their isolation, or feelings of frustration. Meleta's example shows how double standards can be applied in schools and how skin colour which is important in one context becomes irrelevant in another. The attitudes of this headteacher highlight her perceptions of the roles of black teachers and demonstrate that the 'ethnic' roles that are sometimes assigned to black teachers take on greater significance when the context is 'race' specific.

Roles black teachers adopt in school

In chapter two I discussed the fact that some of the black women in this study entered teaching as a result of their experiences of racism in British schools. In this section I intend to show how those experiences are drawn on to educate and enable pupil development. Through the various experiences it is hoped that black women's commitment to teaching will become evident.

It was pointed out earlier that not all of the black women who were educated in British schools had negative experiences. Many had fond memories of schooling. As Maureen reveals,

> I think being at high school was one of the happiest times of my life. The teachers looked after us. They were concerned about our welfare and all of the teachers were particularly concerned about our education. It was the philosophy of the school to study hard, get as many 'O' and A-levels as possible and then to go on to university. The school's success depended on our educational achievements so we were never encouraged to leave at sixteen or eighteen and seek employment. I'm not saying that the staff or pupils weren't prejudiced. They may have been but I didn't notice it because I was so busy working hard at school. (Maureen)

Those educated overseas were also fortunate to have experienced supportive educational environments where they were encouraged by their teachers to do well. However, for the British educated women, racism whether experienced directly or indirectly, was an unmistakable feature of their experiences. The process of institutional racism made many of them feel 'invisible' in the classroom and marginal in the society.

> Teachers, the way they talked to you, most of the time they ignored you in the classroom. They didn't really pay a lot of attention to you when they decided to talk to you. Racism did exist but I didn't realise it was racism until I was much older. When I was taught about being black at school I wasn't taught

that black was good, or that being black was just as good as being white, that we're all equal. The books we read they were all white orientated. You know Peter and Jane books. We weren't taught anything about ourselves. We were just separate from the wider culture and taught to accept it. ... In all honesty I thought that being black was awful. I even painted myself as being white to show how white I could be. (Marsha)

They found that at times it was difficult to communicate to their parents exactly what was happening to them at school. This was partly due to the fact that they did not comprehend fully what was taking place themselves. All the parents had been educated abroad and held to the view that all teachers have children's best interests at heart and could be trusted to help them to succeed (see for example, Bryan et al., 1985).

These early educational experiences as well as their experiences as student teachers provide black women teachers with an insight into a variety of negative school experiences and gives them the ability to empathise with their pupils. Collins regards empathy as part of the 'ethic of caring' and 'central to the knowledge validation process' (1989:766). These negative experiences have also led these women to conclude that it is necessary for black teachers to be in schools to help develop the inner resources of their pupils in order to minimise the impact that negative experiences might otherwise have on them.

The educational struggles of these black women teachers have become a part of their teaching philosophies - *'it wasn't easy for me but if I can do it you can'*. By instilling children with confidence in themselves and their abilities, these black teachers aim to foster resistance to societal inequalities. As role models and sources of inspiration and motivation they hope to counteract the low expectations that some teachers may have of black pupils. One way to achieve this is by offering black children a different view of themselves and their ability to counter the negative stereotypes of 'blackness' in the wider society.

> I give children instances in books where there are black and white people and I try to portray blacks in a better, more positive light. I try to have a variety of different pictures of children in my class to show that the world is made up of so many different groups. We've still got a long way to go but I think it is important to learn about your own roots and culture and to be proud of who you are. I teach children that they belong and that they can achieve. ... I had to learn about myself in order to get through, to get on within the system and then progress through it. These children can too. This is what I try to do in my class. I try to give pupils a positive future. (Marsha)

The curriculum that is offered to pupils in schools has not only been shown to 'exclude' certain groups, but also to 'misrepresent the history and cultures of Asian and other black groups' (Brah, 1992:74). Evans suggests that 'omission and distortion are the features which mark the treatment of Black experience,

achievement and history in schools' (1988:186). During teaching practice these black women indicated that being a role model was only one of many other roles. Marsha considers it to be just as important to correct distortions and negative stereotypes as it is to be a role model. She uses her understanding of racism to challenge inequality - *"if you see something wrong you need to explain it to people and say: "Look this is what I think is wrong with this"*. Others look towards their biographies as a means of getting children through.

> Mum valued education and encouraged all of us. I can't trace the origin of her values, I just know that she wanted us to do the best that we could. Without education she told us our life would be hard like hers. So it was imperative that we worked hard to give ourselves a better future. (Maureen)

> Mom's always given us the strength to fight things and to try to get on in life. She's always told us how important education is. I think without her pushing me and saying: "Chloe, this is going to happen, that it is more than likely that you are going to have to face racism, but eventually you will reach your goal". Without mom I would not have achieved anything. She gave me the confidence to believe in myself, that I could do whatever I wanted to. I hope I can develop some of my confidence in the children. (Chloe)

> Mom always told us that education was the only way out. "If you don't get a good education then you are going to end up in any old job. If you're lucky they will be jobs that nobody else

wants to do but you won't get paid very much for doing that type of work." She used to say that education was the only way out. She still says it and I've always believed it. (Ella)

By giving children some of the strength and confidence they themselves acquired, these teachers hope to create a knowledge base that will enable children to resist oppression.

> I think what I try to do is to give them the confidence to face the world so that it doesn't hurt so much. I suppose what I'm trying to do is to build up their confidence, to make them feel, 'I'm not thick, I can cope'. You know make them see themselves in a positive light because it's so easy to get down in that negative track and stay there. I used to think to myself that I'm going to make sure that children never hurt as I hurt, never feel that sort of pain. It wasn't particularly black children, I just thought children in general should not be hurt like that by anybody. And if I can prevent it I will. But the only way you can prevent it is to be in a position of power which teachers are. (Ella)

Some of the teachers took what can be described as the 'hard-line' approach. This was an approach aimed specifically at black children and was intended to help them understand the importance of achieving their full potential in a context in which racism reduced their chances in life. In any school there are bound to be children who are not academically able or motivated enough to work hard. There are those who have the ability but do no work to realise that potential. The other category of children are regarded as 'time

wasters' who see school as a place to have fun and to do the absolute minimum of work. At primary level children do not understand the difficulties that many of them will have to face in trying to find employment, or secure a career if they do not have any qualifications. These black teachers regarded it as their duty to outline to black pupils in no uncertain terms, that 'life is full of inequalities, especially if you are black'. So in order to compete with white children and the advantages and power that is accorded to being white in this society, they have to work extremely hard. If they do not work to the best of their ability they will further disadvantage themselves by underachieving.

There are different ways of being 'hard' on children as the following excerpts show.

> When Evan first started in my class I said: "Can everybody do this?" He stared at me as if I was joking. I gave him three days and then I thought right it's about time I let this child know that he won't get away with that kind of attitude. It was for his sake as well as my own. I've got fifteen boys in the class, Evan is by no means the worst but he wouldn't put pencil to paper. ... At the end of the day when I evaluated the situation I began to panic for him. I made up my mind that instead of Evan going to play at break times I was going to spend some of my coffee time with him. I knew that if I could get him to do a little each day, a little more than most of the children he would survive. (Meleta)

They think they can get away with more things because I am black but I am a lot harder on the black children who don't do very well and don't push themselves. I always say: "Why aren't you doing this? Why don't you do your homework?" They have to know that education is important, that they are black and that life will not be easy if they do not work hard and try their best. (Chloe)

There are children in my class who don't work hard enough. I tell them straight that they need to work ten times as hard to get anywhere. They could do very well if they didn't mess around. I really hit hard on those children who don't try very hard and who waste time. When I see black children wasting time I have to know why. I say to them: " Do you think that the white children you are messing around with will be waiting for you when they are in university and you have no qualifications? You will be left behind, so stop wasting time". I tell them that it wasn't easy for me to get where I am and that it might be even harder for them to get anywhere because they're black and it is becoming more difficult for black people to achieve. So they must work very hard. They have to realise that they have to earn it and that they won't get their qualifications or a job without working hard. (Marsha)

'Race', gender and class operate to position people differentially in the structures of British society (Troyna, 1994) but it is visible, or 'racial' difference by which black people are excluded from occupying certain positions.

Race is not a hidden quality that surfaces only in connection with external events, it is an essential component of existence imposed by a prejudiced society upon the daily lives of black *(people)* (Etter-Lewis, 1991:44).

Husband (1982) has argued that black people are 'excluded' from participating equally with white people because even when they have the same qualifications stereotypes of black inability operate against them. Such stereotypes also have the effect of limiting black people's chances of educational success and occupational mobility. It is for these reasons that the 'hard-line' attitude adopted by many of these women is focussed on black pupils. These black teachers have also justified this stance by indicating that their own experiences of compulsory and higher education have shown them that many white teachers have low expectations of black pupils/students. As qualified teachers they have also experienced these low expectations first hand. For example, ·

Otis is black. He reads well, he will give you an answer in maths just like that (clicks finger) without any instruments. But I was told that he is slow, that he doesn't work. Yet I haven't found him to be like that. He is so bright. (Rita)

When I read Evan's report from the previous class teacher I realised why other members of staff have been laughing at my attempts to get Evan to work in class. The teacher wrote that he was incapable of achieving anything, because she had identified his brother who she had taught the year before, as a 'slow' learner. But, do you know that once I laid down the

ground rules to Evan, that I expected him to work and that he was going to, his attitude changed. He told me that other teachers had said he was 'stupid' so he just didn't bother. It took him a while to tell me this and I felt really bad about myself because I had really been hard on him. I was adamant that he was going to at least try and do the work because I knew he had the ability. But then if I hadn't been hard he wouldn't have known just how much ability he really does have. (Meleta)

Black teachers believe that if they do not encourage black children to do well or reach out to children who are defined by white teachers as 'slow' or poor learners, then no-one else will. Being 'hard' is a strategy aimed at pulling out the intellectual abilities of black children and providing them with the basis to exist in what is perceived to be a hostile social and economic environment. Providing children with the ability to survive is part of what Ella refers to when she talks of giving children the confidence to *'face the world so that it doesn't hurt so much'*.

From the above examples it is possible to see that being 'hard' is a self imposed political role which these black women teachers have adopted for themselves. This is unlike the mothering discourse (discussed in the introductory chapter) which imposes a role on women through teacher education, through the organisation of the primary school, and the division of labour and authority in infant and junior classrooms.

Although these teachers appear to give inordinate and unequal attention to the needs of black pupils, they were concerned to ensure that all children achieved their full potential.

> Although I admit that I'm especially hard on black children, I'm also hard on white children. There are some white children in my class who are very hesitant about doing their work. Others can't be bothered. Perhaps because in their other classes teachers have told them that they are not academically able. There are a couple of children for instance who have told me they cannot do the work I've set because they are 'thick'. "What do you expect Miss? We're thick." Whoever told them that is irresponsible. I tell these children that they are just as capable as the next person but they won't know this if they don't try. If they really want to do well they have to work hard for it. When they tell me they're 'thick' that just annoys me. There is one child who is very bright but he just doesn't try because he says his parents have told him he will inherit the family business when he finishes school. I have tried to encourage this child to at least try because being privileged isn't everything. He might actually want a life outside of the family business. I could give you so many examples of how I try to educate the children. I wouldn't consider myself a teacher if I only attended to the needs of black children. (Chloe)

> I keep telling the children, all children that, life is tough out there, that you've got to get yourself together. It's fine if you want to leave school with no qualifications and give yourself

no choices. But on the other hand the whole point of school is to get as many bits of paper as you can then you can choose. The whole point of education as I see it, I've always seen it is to prove that you are capable and to give yourself some choice. I was fortunate enough to have left school with O-levels but they were pretty marginal. You don't give yourself a choice if you leave school at sixteen with nothing. You become what everyone else expects of you ... I don't think at sixteen children know what to expect of themselves. So they have to understand why education is important. They have to learn to give themselves a choice. If they want to sweep the streets after when they're twenty-one or whatever fine, at least they've got their eight GCSE's, A-levels and maybe even a degree. That's my philosophy - give yourself a choice, don't be hemmed in by other people's beliefs. (Ella)

Helping pupils to succeed or instilling pupils with confidence is not unique to black teachers (see for example, Woods, 1993; Nias, 1989). However, for these black women teachers their experiences of life as black people and their understanding of the structural constraints of the society in which they live, and black children's marginalization in schools, means that they, like their American counterparts, would regard themselves as failures if they did not provide black pupils with the ability to survive in a racist environment (see for example, Foster, 1990, 1993; Johnston, 1993). Ultimately education forms the basis of choice and success for all pupils.

Another but different example of how black teachers aim to ensure that black pupils do not lose out and that they make the most of their educational opportunities is provided by Ranjit. Ranjit teaches in a majority South Asian school. Sikes states that, 'teachers and student teachers perceive boys and girls differently and have different expectations of and for them' (1993:11; see also Skelton and Hanson, 1989; Spender, 1988; Skelton, 1987). In her first weeks at the school Ranjit noticed a difference in the attitude of some of the boys and girls in her class towards schooling. She suggested that the girls were shy, and that this, together with her presumption of the girls marrying immediately upon finishing secondary schooling, contributed to their lack of participation in class discussions. Brah (1992) has argued that the educational experience of South Asian girls is compounded by sexism and racism. She contends that stereotypes depicting South Asian girls as 'passive' or 'docile' ensure that some teachers pay less attention to the education of South Asian girls. Girls who are labelled in this way are actually perceived as fulfilling the stereotype (Brah and Minhas, 1988). Cultural myths of South Asian parents being uninterested in their daughters participating in further and higher education often play a major role in the type of information about subjects to study and the careers advice South Asian girls receive. It is worth noting that not only do many South Asian parents support the participation of their daughters in higher education, but just as some South Asian parents raise objections to further study for their daughters, so do some white working-class parents (Brah and Minhas, 1988). However, it appears that despite her own upbringing and experience of higher education, Ranjit had absorbed British stereotypes of South Asian

family cultures. These myths were evident in her assumptions concerning the behaviour of the South Asian girls in her class.

> I don't think that their parents expect them to do anything after leaving school, except marry and have children. I would say that the girls are very shy, quiet and that some of them just sit there thinking that studying is too much for them, and that they don't have to know about it, because in a few years time they will marry and have children. I get very upset when the girls don't try. I always say: "Are you going to stay at home and do nothing?"

Clearly, Ranjit failed to question the truth of these cultural myths. Marrying at an early age and becoming housewives may indeed be the experience of some South Asian girls, but this does not mean that it is the norm or that early marriage is restricted to young South Asian women. The majority of the South Asian women (including Ranjit) in this study did not marry on leaving school. Furthermore although there was an expectation of marriage the timing was negotiable. South Asian girls are not an homogenous group so it is unlikely that they would all view education in the same way, or that they, or their parents harbour the views Ranjit claims they do. It is evident from the assumptions Ranjit makes that she has not thought critically about her own comprehension of South Asian family cultures. It is also possible to see as Brah and Minhas state that teachers' personal beliefs affect their 'pedagogical practices and their day to day relationships with pupils' (1988:218).

One wonders if Ranjit would have made similar assumptions about her pupils if they had been white and middle-class. The likelihood is that she would not because similar stereotypes do not exist about white girls. In addition, as the experiences of the black teachers in this chapter have shown, white middle-class parents are not only visible, but appear to be vocal in the educational demands that they make and achieve for their children. The children at Ranjit's school were from working-class backgrounds and Ranjit accordingly fitted her pupils and their parents to the various stereotypes.

> At parents' evening only a few of the parents came in to see me. Those that did just wanted to know if their children (daughters) were behaving themselves. They did not seem to be interested in the work that they had done. The children had produced lots of good work but it was just ignored.

The belief that schools are the province of 'professionals' (Woods, 1994) may contribute to the low attendance of black and working-class parents at parents' evening, but the reticent attitude of the girls in Ranjit's classroom may have been the result of how they viewed their educational abilities. They may have been constrained by low educational aspirations and the opportunities they regarded as being available to working-class children. On the other hand, these girls may have adopted a 'silent' approach in the classroom, because their understanding of school is that, they go there to learn from, and not question their teachers. The notion that 'teachers know best', may have also accounted for their parents adopting a similar non- questioning stance.

In the attempt to involve the girls in class discussions and to fulfil their academic potential, Ranjit applied what can only be described as oppressive teaching methods.

> I really have to drag them into the discussion. I say: "I want the girls to answer this time, you can't just sit there". I have to do that everytime just to bring them out of their shell. I get very angry with them, sometimes I threaten them: "If you don't answer you have to go to the head's office". They are so timid that they will come up with the answer. That's the only way to get the girls to answer and to get them to see that they actually know quite a lot.

Ranjit's approach, albeit for good intentions, is possibly an example of the worst kind of teaching. However, Ranjit believed that this was the only way that she could get equal participation from the girls. She considered her approach to be successful as some of the girls demonstrated 'greater confidence' in class discussions by the end of the year.

Despite its obvious oppressiveness, Ranjit's approach, is part of the 'hardline' philosophy many of the other black women teachers have adopted. What she attempts to do is to challenge patriarchal gender roles and tries to promote an alternative future from the one she perceives these particular girls to have. Like the other black teachers, Ranjit's main goal is to give children a choice, and in providing girls with a choice she wants to give them access to a less unequal future.

It is clear that black women teachers believe that without hard work all children will deny themselves the opportunity to choose. In the same way that Ranjit 'picks' on and shouts at the girls in her class for not questioning, the other black teachers are also 'hard' on children in an attempt to help them achieve their full potential. Being 'hard' is part and parcel of the encouragement and strength given to the children they encounter. All children have to be confident and need a basis from which to choose, if they are to challenge 'race', gender and class inequalities.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

It has been shown that black women have a range of reasons for choosing particular schools at which to teach. For those who chose predominantly white schools it was to prove themselves competent teachers and ultimately to be accepted on an equal basis with white teachers. Once they are in school it becomes clear that the task they have set themselves is not easy as parents question not only their presence, but also their ability. As qualified teachers, black women discover that, as with ITE, they are again expected to fulfil the role of 'professional ethnic'. They are no more accepting of this role than they were as students. In the previous chapter Sita highlighted self definition as an essential element of black women's survival in teaching. By defining their own roles in the classroom black women teachers challenge the external definitions of their roles.

Black women teachers occupy a unique position in teaching. Their teaching is influenced by their multiple social roles. As black women they bring an understanding to the teaching process of what

it means to be black and female. They have a deep insight into how society treats both black people and women. These experiences are utilised in their teaching strategies. Foster, states that black women teachers have fashioned a 'hidden curriculum' which is designed to reverse the one commonly taught in schools, 'one that will enable black students to use education to challenge the status quo, enrich their own lives and oppose ignorance, poverty and isolation' (1993:118). These black women's consciousness of racial and gender oppression and their awareness of the underestimation of black children's abilities places them in a unique position to refute the association of black children with failure. But it is only one aspect of their professional teaching role. Black women teachers aim to ensure that all children achieve their full potential. The extent of the women's commitment to meeting the needs of all their pupils is illustrated by Rita who, for example, collapsed from exhaustion just before the end of her first term. These black women teachers aim to impart their educational philosophy which is that children should give themselves a choice and not be hemmed in by other people's beliefs. This was viewed as one of their main goals. From the above it is possible to assert, that black women teachers play a 'critical role in the life of each child' (Johnston, 1993:72).

Through an examination of the first year post-qualifying teaching experiences of these black women teachers it is possible to see how past educational (school, further education and ITE) and everyday life experiences can influence black teachers understandings of the educational system, and the role(s) they adopt as primary teachers. This leads me to conclude that further comprehension of black teachers' biographies, especially the cultural, racialised and

gendered aspects is essential for understanding their thinking about classroom practice.

PART 2

ELLA'S STORY

INTRODUCTION

I have chosen to present a case study of Ella because her experiences and determination to succeed as a teacher demonstrate and support McKellar's (1989) claim that, only the 'fittest of the fittest' survive in teaching. Although her experiences are the most extreme, they also demonstrate some of the difficulties that the other black women teachers experienced with white parents, during their first year of teaching.

Ella began her new employment fully aware that she would have to prove herself if she was to be accepted by white schools as a 'good' teacher. She was willing to do this and her new school provided her with the test she sought. However, what she experienced proved to be beyond even what she had expected. Ella's story was a test of her courage and testament to her commitment to teaching.

This was her story:

> I found the new head difficult. I always had the feeling that if I hadn't probably done half of my probationary year before

he came I wouldn't have got it. He had to write a report at the end of my year but he did it grudgingly. A HMI came into my lessons and he was very pleased with what he saw. He was really enthusiastic about the way I did my displays and things. But the head wasn't. He sort of nit-picked. He didn't like the way I spoke to the children, he thought it was too familiar. I like to be in there working with them on the floor or wherever they are. I don't like to just stand at the front of the room sort of dominating them, that's not my way. I like to learn with them, be with them in the learning process. That is knowing where they are going and helping them to get there. But he didn't like that. He wanted me to be stand offish, you know just tell them what to do and they would go away and do it. He really wanted a different relationship and it just isn't me. As far as I was aware the children were happy. They looked happy, they loved coming to school and they liked being in my class. So obviously we had a relationship and the way I spoke to them wasn't off-putting. They weren't unhappy. The head would have written the report that way if he had been allowed to. But because he had another opinion, someone with more authority he could hardly say, 'perhaps you need to re-do the year'. But I got the impression that he would have liked to. At the end he had to give me a post of responsibility because the HMI suggested I be given an 'A' allowance.

Ella was appointed by an 'acting' headteacher who was replaced during the Spring term of Ella's first year. Unfortunately, Ella was unable to maintain the type of relationship with the new

headteacher that she had previously established with the 'acting' headteacher. This might have been related to the fact that the out-going headteacher was female and the in-coming one was male. On the other hand, it might have been due to a clash of teaching styles, or of personalities (Duquette, 1994). Ella was not sure why the new headteacher appeared to take an instant dislike to her.

> The head didn't like the way I spoke to the parents. He didn't like the way I spoke to people generally ... he didn't say exactly what he didn't like, he just said he didn't like it.

The extent of the headteacher's dislike for Ella can perhaps be more easily demonstrated by looking at two examples of the way in which he supported parents against her.

> The new head wouldn't support you. I mean he would tell you off for silly little things. For example, "One of the children said you swore". One of the parents had told him their child had heard me swear. I thought don't be ridiculous, of course you're not going to stand there swearing in front of the children when it's just not the sort of thing that you do. But he would have a full investigation into it. He made you seem totally incompetent.

> Another parent came in and said: "My Precious hasn't mentioned science this term so you're not teaching it". I expected him to tell the parent that I was because he had seen my plans and he knew what I was teaching. He had the whole record of what I was doing. But instead he arranged meetings

for me to explain to her and others what I was doing, which I considered a waste of time. I thought it was his job to say: "Look my teacher's teaching it, I've seen her records, her plans. I know what she intends to do and as far as I'm concerned she's covering the curriculum". But he wasn't the least bit supportive.

The headteacher's method of handling the situation was dismissive and unsupportive and Ella felt that he was attempting to undermine her professionalism. She compared the support given to her by the previous headteacher with that of the present one.

There was never any pressure put on the teachers by parents. She must have taken a lot of it, because I never heard of parents going in to her and saying anything. There was only one parent who came in and asked why we were teaching all this 'foreign' stuff because we were doing Diwali and Hanukah. This parent thought that we should be teaching about English culture. She went on and on so I took her to the head and it was sorted out. I had an apology, it was all over and all seemed to be calm. The head before had very definite rules about what she expected of teachers and parents.

The 'acting' headteacher liaised with staff and parents. She saw it as her role to listen to parental wishes and their complaints, and to support her staff. Parents were not allowed to dictate what the teachers taught or the format that it took.

The new head authorised parents to help in the classroom even when you told him that you didn't think it was a good idea. This parent wanted to help because her daughter was in my class. I told him I didn't think it was a good idea because I didn't think she was coming in to help but to be critical of what I was teaching. She was herself a teacher who had taken time out to raise her family. But her method of teaching was totally different to mine. I don't think she understood what I was trying to do. But he insisted that she come in and of course there was an almighty row about that because she wasn't happy in there, her daughter wasn't happy having her there and I wasn't happy having her there. But he insisted because she wanted to. So she came in.

Tomlinson states that many teachers 'cling to a notion of professionalism which excludes parental involvement' and that they need to recognize 'the integral role of parents in the educational enterprise' (1991:6). Although it was shown in the first part of this chapter that overseas trained teachers often find it difficult to accept parental involvement in the classroom because of previously internalised ideologies about parents and schools, most teachers do not object to parental involvement in their children's education. They do, however, object to parents who attempt to exert undue influence in a manner which can lead to teachers' abilities being questioned and which can jeopardize teachers' careers.

Ella tried to understand and rationalize the headteacher's dislike of her.

I'm not sure if he just didn't like me personally. I'm not sure if he's racist. I mean he never actually said anything that could be construed specifically as being racist if you see what I mean. I wasn't sure if the head had any definite rules on race or gender but I would say he liked weaker women and I'm not a weak woman. He liked people who were weaker than himself because he liked to dominate, to intimidate you. He liked to shout at you and if he got away with it he was fine. I think he found it easier to have his way unchallenged. I thought perhaps I intimidated him in some way, I don't know. But he just wasn't comfortable with me at all. We had a staff meeting and whereas before we had all been used to saying what we thought to the previous head, with a discussion to explore the different views, he just shouted. He screamed at me in front of everybody else when I objected to one of his proposals. He wanted to introduce something about giving prizes to children for neat handwriting and I didn't think that was a very good idea. He hadn't thought it through. He thought he was just going to tell us what to do. But that wasn't the way he presented this proposal to us. I presumed we could talk about it. But I don't think the new head had thought anything through. He just said: "This is what I want done". He wouldn't have any questions. When I said: "Why not?" He didn't give me a specific answer. He just said he had heard it on the radio and that it sounded like a good idea so we would do it. I mean you have to think through all the resources, teaching strategies, implications for the organisation of the school and especially for those children whose handwriting is very poor and is unlikely to improve. Obviously he did not want any

opposition. He did not want your opinions ... the atmosphere was horrific. He used to shout at me all the time in staff meetings. It didn't daunt me but the rest of staff felt quite embarrassed on several occasions. ... I think he saw me as a point of conflict because our ideas differed. He didn't like powerful women who could think things through.

Acker (1992) contends that power in schools tends to accrue to a small minority of white middle-class males who largely occupy the positions of authority (see also Hill, 1994; Sikes, 1993). The headteacher occupies the most powerful position. There is still a predominance of women in early years teaching whilst males dominate the junior section of the school. This arrangement replicates and perpetuates patriarchal domestic structures. Schools maintain these differential power relations through a gendered subtext which defines women as passive, submissive, and subordinate (Steedman, 1988). Women who do not conform to this view are defined as deviant. Ella defied these constructed notions of womanhood. She did not allow herself to be 'controlled' or 'bullied' and her willingness to challenge the headteacher was viewed by him as inappropriate and in need of control. It is evident that staff loyalty and support of institutional policies are of paramount importance to any headteacher (Hargreaves, 1972), but Ella felt that whenever she questioned certain issues or perceptions, the headteacher responded with meetings in which the atmosphere was confrontational in order to intimidate her into accepting his authority.

The arrival of the new head sort of triggered off all sort of hidden things which weren't there before, or were well hidden when I went to the school. For example, this particular teacher had ideas which I considered to be racist. She would say things like: "Its their way of doing things", or "They haven't integrated properly into our society and they have to learn to live with us. After all they are in our country". She couldn't see my point of view. The head would let her and others get away with these kind of remarks even though I challenged their racism. The head would arrange a meeting with myself, a school governor, the teacher concerned and himself. You'd feel quite alone. He would take you into his room, close the door and all these people would be there. I just felt defensive because it is quite threatening to find yourself in that kind of situation. I felt it was to intimidate you, to make you back down, or make you be 'reasonable' as he used to call it.

The actions of the headteacher seem to be premised on the notion that control is more important than negotiation or collaboration (Al-Khalifa, 1989). Hargreaves states that the 'headteacher - teacher' relationship is 'autocratic in structure' and that 'headteachers adopt a variety of strategies to maintain their authority' (1972:409). Following on from this, it might be argued that some headteachers bully male and female teachers alike to reinforce their position (see for example, Nias, 1989). In that respect there would appear to be nothing unusual about Ella's experiences with this particular headteacher. However, one cannot ignore the interaction of 'race' and gender in social relationships. Ella's experiences show how

power relationships are made more complex by the variables of gender and 'race'. The status accorded to women by men ultimately means that women find themselves in less powerful positions. According to Menter, 'power imbalances in relationships will usually be amplified where a strong position is occupied by a man and or where a weak position is occupied by a woman' (1989a:464), but black women find their status also compounded by 'race'. Racism renders black women both visible and invisible. They become visible as targets for domination and invisible as human beings with feelings, humanity and the right to exist (Collins 1989). The actions of the headteacher suggest that he uses both gendered and racist strategies to try to silence Ella.

Ella occupies contradictory positions of power. As a teacher she holds a powerful position in terms of managing the knowledge that she teaches, but as a black woman in a majority white school her power resembles that of other black people in society. Nevertheless, she constructs her own 'power' base and sense of authority in the school by refusing to conform to the unreasonable wishes of the headteacher, and by challenging the 'right' of others to dismiss her opinions. Ella is in a subordinate position to that of the headteacher but she does not allow this fact to overcome her. At secondary school, she had run away from such experiences, but she had also learnt different ways to 'fight' for what she believed in. Her 'fighting' spirit was acquired when she was at school and as a teacher it stood her in good stead.

> My whole background says fight for what you believe in. All the way through secondary school teachers were extremely

racist and they told us several times to: "Go back to the jungle where you come from". You've got to stand up for yourself. I wasn't able to then. But if people are being racist you have to tell them. They won't like it but they have to be told... I've been accused of being arrogant but I think you have to know what you're worth. I learnt a long time ago that if you don't say what you think people will just walk all over you and your life will be made miserable. In the staffroom if someone said something that I felt was racist or knew dam well was racist and I pointed it out to them, they would just look at me and say: "Oh she's got a chip on her shoulder. What do you expect?" People tell you you're just being sensitive, so you have to learn ways of telling them or showing them that you're not while still retaining your calm and being clear, logical and reasonable. It's quite hard work actually because you're so furious, but you have to learn to say what you want to without being aggressive so that people will understand what you are trying to show them.

Lorde argues that 'anger is an appropriate reaction to racist attitudes' (1984:129). Ella indicated that she was angry but she found her anger empowering because it enabled her to fend off the 'attack' by her headteacher. For Lorde (1984) anger is linked to black women's survival. Even though Ella was at times 'scared', 'weak', battle weary, her anger did not allow the embers of battle to diminish. If they do Ella suggests that racism will never be defeated and that white teachers will continue in the belief that the negative views they hold of black people are correct.

I was happy to walk in there and tell them all: "You're wrong!" and stick to my guns. But it took quite a lot of will power to actually sit down and say: "You're wrong I'm not changing my mind", when there's four or five of them trying to persuade you that it is you who is misguided. I think you have to project an image, that even if you are dead scared, you're not going to let anyone else know about it ... Sometimes you get to the stage where it's all so much anyway, you're feeling so much pain, hurt, anger that it doesn't matter how they try to convince you that you are wrong because you just say your piece and if they don't like it tough. I mean what can they do to you? They can't kill you. They can only dismiss you from the post.

Despite Ella's negative relations with the headteacher she did not consider his actions were always motivated by racism. She suggested that the headteacher's lack of support of her attempts to deal with the racist behaviour of pupils in her class did not mean that he was racist.

There were a couple of boys who could be particularly nasty. They would say: "Paki's" and I told them that: "I don't like talk like that in my classroom. I'm not having it". I sent them to the head but he just couldn't handle it. It was the sort of school that you had to handle it yourself. If someone made a racist comment of any sort, or even a sexist comment that you didn't like you wouldn't send them to the head, because he would just say: "You naughty boy go away and don't do it again". He didn't

sort of impress on them the enormity of what they had done. He didn't know how to handle it.

Ella suggests that the headteacher's inability to deal with these issues was due to his incompetence and lack of knowledge. However, it would be safe to assume that one reason for his inability to deal with the pupils racism and sexism was due to his own racist and sexist beliefs.

END POINTS

In chapter four, I stated that the school was a place of conflict for black women student teachers. Ella's experiences as a qualified teacher adds credence to this viewpoint. She highlights schools as places of struggle where black teachers are forced into conflict over the racist agendas of schools. Most of the power struggles between parent and teacher are reinforced by the main authority in the school, the headteacher. In Ella's case the struggle between headteacher and teacher overshadowed all other struggles.

Hargreaves (1972) found that some student teachers were unwilling to conform to traditional school values and accept the headteacher's authority, or to ingratiate themselves with the headteacher. Ella is an example of a newly qualified teacher who refused to be subservient or to become socialized into the headteacher's way of doing things. She acknowledged the headteacher's authority over her, but she was adamant that she would not play the 'supportive' and subservient role, to a man who was not prepared to accept her as an 'equal human being'. It is noticeable how gender surfaces in

women's teaching experiences when there is conflict over 'power' and 'control' in schools. Ella's experience is possibly a good example of the gender issues which other black women in this study suppressed in their concern about racism. From this it could be argued that gender was always present as a feature of black women's teaching experiences, but its meaning was evident to only one woman. This leads me to conclude that the combination of 'race' and gender are important factors in black women's teaching experiences. However, it is to racism that they attribute most of their negative experiences.

Lorde states that,

> change means growth, and growth can be painful. But we sharpen self-definition by exposing the self in work (1984:2).

Through Ella's experiences and her defiant response it is possible to see how black women teachers are able to move from being marginalized individuals to embrace alternative positive definitions for themselves. Ella's anguish and inner development are evident as she emerges from her traumatic experiences even stronger than before, and able to determine her own existence in the racist and sexist environment she encounters. Her actions 'exemplify the connections between experiencing oppression, developing a self-defined standpoint on that experience, and resistance' (Collins, 1989:749; see also Etter-Lewis, 1991).

Ella's experience clearly demonstrates McKellar's (1989) theory that only the 'fittest of the fittest' survive in teaching. In spite of this,

she admitted that although at times she felt 'powerful', she also felt scared and weak. However, this weakness was concealed to prevent it being used against her.

Although Ella's quality of life in this particular school was unacceptable, her tenacity shows that black women teachers are not necessarily discouraged from entering or remaining in teaching. Ella's negative experiences did not alienate her from teaching. However, she decided that it was not in her best interests to remain at this school. Ella has now moved to another school where her relationship with staff is much more encouraging and supportive. She has put these negative experiences behind her. In the same way that other black teachers who have had similar experiences find the strength to continue, Ella intends to teach as long as she is able to.

Finally,

I shall end this chapter with one question which was raised consistently by the black women teachers during their first year of teaching. Should it be the role of black teachers to re-educate society?

> Some of them are so ignorant it's unbelievable. There's one teacher, second deputy actually who still calls us 'coloureds'. I didn't think people still used that word Uvanney honestly. It seems to me that some people are frightened to say the word 'black' whereas other teachers will quite happily say: "This black child did this". They need to be educated but I don't really want to be the one to do it. (Maureen)

There is a need for re-education if the type of experiences highlighted by Ella are to remain isolated and if black teachers are to be accepted by the wider society as 'real' teachers.

> The other day a man came into the school. He was being interviewed for a Section 11 post but I didn't know who he was and there were two Year 6 girls showing him round the school. I just happened to meet them on the stairs. So I said: "How do you do?" Trying to make myself look quite professional. The children said: "This is Mrs. Iris" and he said: "You're a teacher are you?" I thought well, who do you think I am, the caretaker? (Marsha)

> When the children came with their parents in the morning I was usually pottering about in the classroom. I would say: "Good morning", but there would be no response. Sometimes it was obvious that they wanted to talk. If the normal class teacher was not there or if she was busy I would say: "Can I help?" They would reply: "No it's alright", and they would leave. It was like I wasn't there. They totally ignored me. (Bernice)

But like Ella, not all black teachers are willing to take on the role of re-educator, nor should they be expected to. If black teachers are to be accepted on a par with white teachers, as part of society and the classroom, HEI's and schools would need to think about how pupils, staff and students can be re-educated as to the different spheres of employment and occupational positions black people can be found in, without reinforcing the racist myths which already exist. This is

considered important if the viewpoint expressed by a child during a student's teaching practice, that 'black teachers are merely helpers', is to be eradicated. Antiracist and equal opportunities policies have a part to play in this re-education process. But if there is to be a wider understanding about the experiences and relationships or positions of black people in society, the experiences of black teachers and student teachers would need to be incorporated as an integral part of that process. Recruiting and increasing the number of black teachers is not enough. It is only when the experiences of black teachers/students are contextualised that we see the amount of work that needs to be done to bring about a change in people's thinking and a reduction in racial inequality. There is an urgent need to address this issue if we are to move forward and encourage more black students into teaching.

CHAPTER 6

REFLECTIONS AND FINAL COMMENTS

In this thesis I have tried to show through the life history method the importance of examining black student teachers ITE and qualified teaching experiences. Black women's voices have been used to examine and illuminate their motivations to enter ITE, their perceptions of ITE, their experiences in ITE and their experiences as practising teachers. This thesis highlighted the interpretation and meanings black women students applied to their ITE experiences and how those experiences contributed to their learning in ITE. It also threw light on how black women viewed primary teaching and their role as primary teachers.

The women reflected on a number of aspects of being a black student teacher: their institutional relationships with peers and lecturers, their experience of the College's multicultural and equal opportunities policies, their experience of teaching practice in schools (including the attitudes of pupils and supervising teachers) and college teaching practice supervision. A smaller number also discussed their experiences as qualified teachers with parents, teaching staff and the roles they adopted as practising teachers.

This final chapter draws together the main findings and conclusions which were derived from this study. The implications of the study are discussed and the implications for further research are also explored. It is important to state that the findings of this study are limited in the sense that they were derived from one HEI, from the

personal accounts of eighteen women and these accounts are not supported by institutional observation (College, teaching practice schools or the women's school's of employment), or a close scrutiny of the policies at work in the College. Having said that this study is limited, this research is nevertheless considered important for the following reasons. First, as school-based teacher training becomes the norm, the issue of student experience takes on a dimension of urgency. This study recorded ITE experiences from the perspective of black women. This has not been done before. I have shown in particular, that the type of experiences black women students have during teaching practice has implications for the type of teachers that they become, the type of school's that they choose to begin their teaching careers in and the type of roles that they adopt as students and as qualified teachers. Secondly, by examining the ITE and qualified teaching experiences of black women this research adds another, but different facet to the existing body of literature on teacher education. One the one hand, it was noticeable that the literature which focuses on gender in teaching ignored racism in the experiences of black students in ITE, and of black teachers. On the other, in the literature pertaining to the experiences of black students and practising black teachers a specific focus on gender was markedly absent. Thirdly, by teasing out the detail of the women's experiences over an extended period and in the different contexts of the ITE institution, the teaching practice school and the final place of work, the study was therefore able not only to trace patterns and continuities in the experiences of black teachers but to highlight areas for improvement and change. Fourthly, as a result of using the life history method to explore black women's life experiences prior to entering ITE and during ITE, and providing an

insight into the complexity of black women's lives, this thesis is considered to have made a valuable contribution to life history research. It is evident that an individual's past experiences can influence their understandings of their present lives and the decisions they take in their present lives (Armstrong, 1987; Kohli, 1981. Through the life history method this study has shown how black women's experiences of racism in their early education contributed to many of the decisions they made in their present lives, for example, their choice of career, their role as student teachers and as practising teachers. Such experiences also contributed to how they experienced certain situations in the College, teaching practice schools and their school of employment. From the above it can be argued that the combination of black women's ITE experiences and the life history method makes this a unique study.

In view of the limitations of this study it is recognised that only tentative conclusions and recommendations can be made. As this study was primarily concerned with black student ITE experience, the main conclusions and recommendations are drawn from the chapters which examined institutional and teaching practice experience. Before I review the main findings of this study I would like to discuss some of the conclusions I have come to as a result of engaging in life history research.

Implications of the life history method

In chapter one reference was made to the advantages that I found in using the life history method as a means of collecting data. It is not my intention here to cover those points again except to say that the willingness of the women to talk to me about their ITE and other experiences underlines the usefulness of the life history method as a tool for eliciting women's experiences (Geiger, 1986; Graham, 1984). It also highlights the importance of reflection and the need for a reflective practitioner in teaching (Schon, 1983). While the shift in ITE from theory to practice (DFE, 1992, 1993) has meant that emphasis is now placed on the acquisition of practical skills in the classroom, this study has shown that reflection provides a basis for professional teacher competence to develop and a framework from which to make informed decisions for pupil learning (Whitty, 1992; Galuzzo and Pankratz, 1990). This would seem to support Whitty's (1992) contention that reflection is not incompatible with a competency-based model of teaching. It also provides evidence of the need for well trained, supportive and effective school mentors in ITE who are able to facilitate student teacher reflection (Blair and Bourdillon, forthcoming, Hargreaves, D, 1994). The experiences highlighted in the case study in chapter five would also seem to suggest that there is a need for a supportive mentor for qualified teaching staff.

In chapter one I discussed the reasons for restricting this study to one HEI and eighteen black women. The study was necessarily limited because of the time consuming nature of collecting life history data where multiple lives are involved, and the amount of time that is needed to transcribe the recorded material. With

hindsight however, I realise that this research could have benefited from interviews with College and school teaching practice staff. Observations in the College, teaching practice schools and the schools where some of the women took up employment after qualification would have helped to verify and support the women's claims, and clarify any uncertainties, for example, the role of gender in the women's experiences. It might also have provided another dimension to them. The case study in chapter five reflects an individual response to a unique situation, but it also illustrates how the study could have benefited from classroom and wider school observation, and staff interviews.

The format chosen to highlight the women's experiences has meant that a lot of the women's lives prior to entering ITE and their life experiences outside ITE and qualified teaching did not filter through in the discussion as much as I would have liked. But this was the only way that I could give sufficient insight into the women's ITE and qualified teaching experiences. Having looked at the amount of data that I was unable to include in this study because of the word limit for thesis presentation, I am inclined to argue that researching a smaller number would have enabled me to present the women's life experiences in more detail as individual case studies.

The adopted research method has enabled me delve into the lives of a group of black women and to present a new perspective on black women's experiences of ITE and teaching. It has also allowed me as a researcher to understand how my own past is part and parcel of my present circumstances. However, in view of my personal experiences as a result of collecting life history data, I would suggest

that anyone who chooses to adopt this method would need to be aware of the dangers of becoming too personally involved in the lives of those they study. A more detached approach is required if this type of research is to benefit the researcher and the researched.

In the next sections the main findings of this research together with the gaps and weaknesses that I have identified in teacher education will be discussed. I will also highlight clear lessons (in general) about ITE which I believe can be learnt from this study.

The main findings of researching black women in ITE

This research has shown that black women are motivated to enter ITE for a number of reasons, namely: convenience, parenting, racism, the desire to contribute to children's development and awareness, migration, parental influences, positive school experiences and the desire to share that through teaching. The assumption that women become teachers because they consider it a suitable or 'natural' vocation for women (Burgess and Carter, 1992) has not been borne out by this study. It seems safe to conclude that the views of these black women are likely to be representative of women in general.

I have argued that black women have a variety of experiences in ITE and as newly qualified teachers, and that these experiences differ in some significant ways to the experiences of white teachers. For the black women in this study their experiences of ITE and qualified teaching were conditioned by two main factors: 'race' and gender. It was noticeable however, that regardless of the women's ethnic

background, the ITE subjects they studied, the schools that they did teaching practice in, and the good intentions of individuals and the College, they cited racism as the most prevalent feature in their experiences. The findings of this research would seem to support Gillborn's contention that,

> racism is a fact of life in contemporary Britain. It takes many forms, changes between contexts and over time, but nevertheless acts to shape people's experiences and opportunities (1995:176).

This study has shown that what a student teacher brings to teaching in terms of beliefs, history and attitudes contributes to their learning and their development as a teacher (Goodson, 1993; McElroy-Johnson, 1993; Woods, 1993). It shows in addition how 'racial' and cultural identity can impact on black teacher institutional experience, and their development and practice as teachers. Chapter four illustrated the determination of black women to reverse their negative teaching practice experiences and to succeed in ITE. Chapters four and five highlighted the commitment and the 'personal investment' (including emotional) (Nias, 1989) that black women as students and as qualified teachers are prepared to put into primary teaching despite some considerable obstacles. The roles these black women adopted as qualified teachers leads me to conclude that the combination of black women's life experiences and those derived from their ITE course, provide them with insights and inner resources which make them particularly sensitive to the needs of primary teaching and the disadvantages that children might face.

Institutional experience and practice

In chapter three it was shown that although Rosehall College has a multicultural and an equal opportunities policy, the institutional experience of these black women and the curriculum that was offered to them did not reflect the expressed intentions in the policies. The women criticised their College for not providing a multicultural curriculum and the knowledge and skills that they felt would have enabled them to implement a multicultural curriculum in schools. They were also critical of some aspects of course provision for women with children and women as carers. From this it was possible to draw lessons in relation to 'handed-down' policies and their chances of success, as well as to gain better understanding of the subtle ways in which students are affected by institutional attempts to implement 'liberal' policies.

It has been established that multicultural education aims to provide people with information about different cultures and to reduce prejudice which is thought to occur through ignorance. However, the women's experiences revealed that multicultural education by itself was insufficient to tackle the complexities of culture, 'race' and racism. It would appear that little thought was given within the College to how 'cultural understanding occurs', the 'actual effects of teaching about other cultures' (Rattansi, 1992:28), or the fact that individuals have multiple identities. Hence, a situation persisted in the College in which black students felt 'set apart' and 'difference' acquired a negative rather than a positive meaning for them. Troyna (1987) argues that prejudice reduction through the cultural 'contact hypothesis' is 'wishful thinking' (ibid:313) because

multiculturalists do not take into account structural and institutional inequality, or the ideologies that inform peoples' thinking, or the differential access that people have to resources in society. Like many Western countries, Britain is a society in which the structure and organization of the economic, political, cultural and social system perpetuates dominant white structures and maintains black people in subordinate positions (Essed, 1991; Troyna, 1989). According to Hall (1980) 'race',

> assigns and fixes the positions relative to each other and with respect to the basic structures of society simultaneously legitimating these ascribed positions (Hall 1980, quoted by Gilroy, 1987:30).

He further argues that,

> racism plays an active role articulating political, cultural and economic elements into a complex and contradictory unity' (Hall 1980, quoted by Gilroy, 1987:30).

It has been shown in this thesis that the concepts of 'race' and racism are neither static nor neutral phenomena. 'Race' and racism operate at different levels, in different contexts, in different ways and at varying points in time. Hatcher and Troyna (1993) argue that,

> racist ideologies find a purchase in children's cultures because they provide answers to the problems of everyday life, problems of making sense of the world, and problems of negotiating social interaction with other children (ibid:118).

On the basis of these black women's experiences racism operates in similar ways amongst adults. Although individual racism can be 'un-learned' (Epstein, 1993), Gillborn (1995) has pointed out that educational policies by themselves 'cannot eradicate racism from society' because 'racism gains its strength from too many quarters to simply be 'taught' out of existence' (ibid:2). He further argues that racism remains widespread because government educational policies deny that 'structural factors' are 'implicated' in societal racism (ibid:33; see also Sarup, 1991). The government suggest instead that the problem for society is anti-racism (Gillborn, 1995). This stance not only attempts to divert attention away from the existence of societal racism, but it also justifies the government's lethargy in tackling racism. Such a course of action has the effect of confirming to minority groups that as 'outsiders' the nation state will not acknowledge or serve their interests.

While there is no evidence that the College deliberately set out to ignore staff and student racism, or to disadvantage black students, or even to make them feel different, I would argue that the combination of a lack of understanding of cultural differences and racism in the College contributed to black women students experiencing oppression. These factors left students with the impression that the institutional policies were more rhetorical than practical. They also reinforced the sense of unbelonging these students felt within the College community. It needs to be pointed out however, that although this was the overwhelming feeling amongst black women students and while their experiences may well reflect the broader experience of black students in ITE (see for example, Siraj-Blatchford, 1991; Clay et al., 1991), the implementation of

institutional policies are not as straightforward as they might seem (see for example, Gilborn, 1995). Firstly, government directives dictate to a large extent the content of the curriculum that is offered to student teachers, as students need to be enabled to 'deliver' the National Curriculum in schools. Secondly, there is a lack of government commitment to equal opportunities issues in teaching. As a result 'race', gender and class have been 'swept from the policy agenda' (Gillborn, 1995:17; Troyna, 1992) and from government guidelines on teacher education (DFE, 1992, 1993). In addition, government emphasis on market forces in education, British nationhood and a 'common' culture has led to the deracialization of education policies. This means that even though individual HEIs may be conscious of equality issues and have devised ways of ensuring that students are not undermined as people and as teachers, they may find themselves in the difficult position of trying to implement institutional policies which although important for the well being of the institution, are not supported by official government guidelines or policies. Consequently, if institutional policies are to be implemented it is usually the committed who attempt to do so. Unfortunately, as these black women students found this type of implementation often becomes a hit and miss affair with many activities and aspects of institutional life being seemingly permeated with its good intentions.

It also seems clear that racism existed in the organization of the College before multicultural education and equal opportunities policies were 'tacked on' to its existing structures - hence another reason for the negative experiences of the black students. If we examine the structure and organization of the College, for example,

in terms of its representativeness, how decisions are made, who decides the curriculum and the nature of the curriculum content, it becomes clear that the College was a predominantly white middle-class institution. This image was reinforced by the way in which the staff and student community were positioned. The few minority ethnic staff who were there were employed at the lowest levels as cleaners and canteen assistants.

> Rosehall is basically a white middle-class institution and this is the image that it portrays. There are a lot Asians, Italians, Polish, black people, all sorts of nationalities who live in the area but the college does not reflect that, apart from the cleaners and the refectory staff. (Olive)

Earlier I stated that I had been employed by Rosehall College prior to the commencement of this research. It was noticeable that although a number of women taught at the College, women were markedly absent from senior positions and the male dominated management hierarchy. The management hierarchy made decisions about College policy, courses, staff employment, their responsibilities, student intake and the curriculum. It could be argued that the employment positions and the positions of power in the College reflected wider societal employment positions and power structures. It is nevertheless worth accumulating such evidence as a way of forcing attention on these issues.

Implications of the study for Rosehall College and future black student experience

Given the place of the College within the broader context of societal inequality, the role of racism as a structuring feature of black people's experiences in Britain and government neglect of equality issues, it becomes clear that the task which the College faces in attempting to change black student institutional ITE experience is not an easy one. In chapter three Olive suggested that the College needed to prepare itself for accepting culturally and racially diverse students. From this and other findings within this research it would seem appropriate to suggest that a great deal of self-reflection is needed in the College so that the stated objectives, the College ethos and culture and the institutional structures are carefully examined for the ways in which they contribute to the exclusion of women, religious groups and black people. In brief, the College would need to consider whether and how its practices and policies reflect and sustain the status quo. In addition to the above, if the College is committed to pursuing a multiracial ethos and culture, it would need to question and challenge its own role as a transmitter of the dominant culture and social values. Similarly, other HEIs might like to consider the above suggestions and assess if their own institution actually meets the needs and interests of the student and staff community, and if it is representative of the wider society.

The experiences of these black women would also seem to point to the need for the institution to provide opportunities for student discussion and debate about the curriculum, about 'difference', about cultural diversity and about how racism operates. The cultural

misconceptions which were highlighted in chapter three when looking at language in the curriculum point to a need to examine the impact of cultural racism on student teachers attitudes and perceptions. In examining student racism the College would need to take into account the 'constraining impact of entrenched ideas and practices on human agency' (Essed, 1991:12). It has been shown that student discussions involving diversity and 'difference' can lead to heated exchanges. Where such debates take place therefore, it would be necessary to generate a positive and trusting atmosphere. The strategies that are devised by tutors to disrupt ethnocentric world views would need to be employed in such a way that, 'students not only recognize the specific nature of racial inequality but the nature of the inequalities they themselves experience and share with black people' (Troyna, 1987:316; see also McCarthy, 1993). This would go some way towards developing a more effective and appropriate education for students and pupils living in a multiracial, multicultural society. The experiences of these black women also indicate that black students would need to be reassured that their tutors and ultimately the institution would support them, and address any personal racism that they may encounter as a result of such debates.

Creating forums for discussion would go some way to addressing another issue which concerned the black women in this study. Open discussion of the symbolism of skin colour would create opportunities to explore the notion of the 'professional ethnic', and help to create an understanding of the varied contributions that black students are able to make to education.

Ethnic minorities are here to stay and we can make a valuable contribution to the education system but it has to be encouraged. I mean really encouraged, we don't want to have the kind situation we have at the moment where the only thing that is accepted or appears to be valued is when we talk about multicultural issues. (Sita)

This research indicates that staff and students would need to be enabled to explore ways in which the College can contribute to educational equality, especially 'race' equality, without placing all the responsibility for achieving this on black students. Additionally, staff would need to think of ways of positively including diversity in their teaching in the absence of black students.

Higher education institutions are now under considerable pressure to compete on market terms for funding. Research and publications take on a higher profile leaving less room for staff self-reflection on the issues they teach students. It is nevertheless true that if the concerns of black students are to be addressed, time would need to be created for discussion and reflection of racism and other areas of inequality. To make this happen opportunities would need to be created for staff to attend equal opportunity and antiracist staff development courses. Staff would need to be helped through institutional support to explore, for example, the complexities of 'race', racism and how racist attitudes can affect the knowledge that is produced. Staff are more likely to be willing to address racial inequality if they understand the effects of racist attitudes in and outside the institution, and how this contributes to black students' institutional and teaching practice experiences.

The absence of black staff in the College and the need for black teacher educators and teachers was noted in the black students' interviews. In chapter four it was argued that 'colour matching' was a good way of providing pupils in schools with positive role models. However, as an initiative it was insufficient by itself to alleviate the problem of teacher and pupil racism (this is discussed further in the next section). Despite some of their negative experiences during teaching practice the students felt that Rosehall College should find a way of increasing the number of black students who came to the College to train as teachers.

> They (college) say they cannot get black students in but I don't think they have tried hard enough. They don't go into the community or go into schools and talk about teaching and what the college has to offer. They might say it's easy to walk into the institution but you soon feel out of place once you are in it. Their image is not sufficient to attract the black students who might not be so confident. For example, those who went to the same type of schools that I did, throughout the same period and had really bad experiences. (Ella)

Ella makes the point that the College needs to interact more with the communities which surround it. However, token forays into the lives of communities are unlikely in themselves to make an impact. A more effective method may be the building of closer links with secondary schools and arranging Open days in the College to enable pupils to see what the College does and what it has to offer prospective student teachers. For this to be a positive learning experience for black students, the College would clearly need to

address the ethos that permeates it at various levels. The main areas would be the prospectus, the College environment, the content of the curriculum, student accommodation, social entertainment and explicit examples of how inequalities are tackled.

> Rosehall is like most colleges and most white people who make assumptions about black people, based on their knowledge about you, or what they think they know about black people. Courses are ethnocentric and when reference is made to black people what is said shows that tutors do not have an understanding of black cultures or black pupils. The curriculum needs to be multicultural and truly reflect black people, not how they are imagined. But it isn't only the type of courses, but how they are presented and the way the college is represented which is important. There has to be a realisation that cultural diversity is important, not just to black students but to everyone. (Naomi)

> The most important thing about being at college is doing your degree but there is the social side as well. The events that are put on don't cater for black students. There's no accommodation of different cultures. We asked the students union several times if we could put on different cultural events. But we were told that we couldn't because we wouldn't get enough support because the majority of students wouldn't like it. They didn't even ask the students if they would mind, they just said that they would. ... I think college should aim to have a mixture of events that show the college is multiracial. (Chloe)

If the College developed an atmosphere which is conducive to respecting and supporting cultural diversity, for example, in terms of student intake, student dress, religious beliefs/attitudes and social entertainment and, demonstrated that the curriculum it offers not only meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, but is underpinned by antiracist ideology and is relevant and meaningful to the student community, this would also help to make the College more attractive to black pupils.

A thorny area, but one which demands attention relates to the College's policy for dealing with reported instances of racism. While none of the black women made official complaints about racist staff/student attitudes or racist experiences, black students would need to be enabled to report instances of racism which are detrimental to their well being as students, and feel confident that their complaints will be addressed. This is especially important as racism can affect black students academic experience and their relationship with peers and staff. It is also important considering the prevailing view of racism in teaching held by black pupils (Singh, 1988; Swann, 1985). If student integration, respect for cultural diversity, positive black student institutional experiences, the development of antiracist curricula and procedures for dealing with the racist behaviour of students and staff, are evident to black pupils and other black people who visit the College, black students may be encouraged to join the teaching profession.

Having looked at how the College could respond to the concerns which have been raised by the black students in this study. I now wish to make a more general point concerning HEIs as a whole. As

we move towards the era of greater European integration the likelihood is that student communities will become more diverse. This will increase the necessity for HEIs to reassess in order to meet their students' needs. As students are the ones most affected by institutional policies, the effectiveness of policy documents cannot be fully assessed without an analysis and comprehension of students' views. It is therefore important that HEIs understand the expectations of students and how students are affected by their policies and institutional practices. In view of the comments of the black students in this research, as part of the way forward, teacher educators (and course managers/directors) would need to be able to sit down with students and debate any changes that are considered necessary to bring about a positive or more enhanced student experience.

Student placement and teaching practice

In chapter four the main strengths and weaknesses of teaching practice placements were discussed. It was argued that 'colour matching' was used to allocate the black women in this study to teaching practice schools. It seems clear that the intentions behind this concept were positive. Through this principle placements tutors sought to provide positive role models to black and white pupils, and to help pupils and staff in schools to challenge racist thinking and racist stereotypes. For some of the black women their experiences were indeed positive (especially where religious diversity was respected), but for many, their allocation particularly to mainly or all white schools provided them with negative experiences. They found that their ability to 'fit into' these schools was not only

questioned by those schools, but they also experienced teacher and pupil racism in these schools. Some of the situations in which the women were expected to teach undermined their teaching skills and their ability to teach. It was also found that some multiethnic schools were unable to adequately support black students. In both multiethnic and predominantly white schools some of the women were perceived and treated as 'professional ethnics', and others received variable support from the school and College supervisory staff.

The notion of 'colour matching' shows initiative and forward thought on the part of placement tutors. However, the women's experiences as a result of such allocations serve to illustrate two main points. First, that the concept is fraught with difficulties, especially, where there is a lack of understanding on the part of white supervising class teachers of the role black students should play in schools, and the purpose of black students placed in their classrooms. Secondly, that good intentions can also produce negative effects if the frame of reference in which decisions makers (for example, supervising class teachers and headteachers) operate is negative towards black people.

A significant factor which emerged as a result of teaching practice was that the classroom was a site of struggle for black women student teachers. Even though many of the women had experienced racism in their earlier education, it did not fully prepare them for the level of individual and institutional racism that they encountered in predominantly and all white schools. It is evident that the women's negative teaching practice experiences overshadowed their positive

ones. However, it can be argued that while instances of racism severely affected these black women's experience of teaching practice, it did not dampen their resolve to become primary teachers. In actual fact, for many of the women their negative teaching practice experiences made them more determined to make subsequent teaching practice experiences more positive. The ultimate aim being to develop professional competence and qualify as teachers.

Implications of the study for teacher training

In chapter one it was pointed out that it is possible to generalise from the experiences of a group of people 'by showing that several life histories are basically similar' (Armstrong, 1987:17). The themes which emerged during teaching practice for the black women students in this study point to common perceptions and experiences and provide a basis from which generalisations can be made. The following thoughts are offered in light of their experiences. It is hoped that they will benefit black students in Rosehall College and other HEIs.

Earlier I made reference to the fact that as teacher education becomes more school-based, the issue of student experience takes on a dimension of urgency. This study, despite the small number, has shown that racism was a prevalent feature of the black women's experiences. It seems likely that if racism was such a major aspect of their experiences it is likely to be a feature of black student ITE experience elsewhere. I have previously mentioned that equality issues are absent from government guidelines for teacher education

(DFE, 1992, 1993). The absence of such essential teacher education criteria and the increased time student teachers' will spend in school, reinforces the need for greater attention to be paid to racism and discrimination at all levels. HEIs will be negotiating with schools, criteria on which to base their partnership arrangements. The issue of racism and discrimination would need to be an essential element of the discussions if HEIs are to ensure parity of experience for all of its students. This might go some way towards reassuring black teachers and pupils that racism need not be an inevitable part of their experience of education.

In view of the need to enable students to acquire the skills necessary to develop their professional competence as teachers, and address racism in black student experience, teaching practice placements would need to be carefully chosen (within and outside of the opted out sector). Whilst 'colour matched' student placements can help to counteract existing stereotypes about black people, and present black and white pupils and staff with positive black role models, I have shown how this is not inevitable, but also that such placements would need to be discussed with students to avoid suspicion of a 'racial conspiracy'. They would also need to be subjected to careful scrutiny to ensure that black students' skills are not under-utilised or undermined by negative experiences of racism.

In addition to the above, HEIs would need to ensure that those chosen for the supervision of black students are actually able to achieve that end. One way of accomplishing this is by having agreed criteria which outlines the purpose and expectations of teaching practice supervision, and methods of monitoring student progress which take

account of individual and institutional racism. This research points to the need for greater liaison between HEI tutor, school teaching practice supervisor and student (Menter, 1989a). Those responsible for teaching practice placements would need to monitor and evaluate the supervision and assessment process, as well as black student teaching practice experience. If there is to be parity of student experience, HEIs and teaching practice schools would need to establish a partnership in which criteria regarding antiracism and antiracist practices are discussed and agreed upon. Where there is evidence to suggest that black students persistently encounter racism in particular placement schools, it seems likely that such schools would be unsuitable training grounds for black students. Schools which turn a blind eye to acts of pupil or staff racism, or prove to be incapable of dealing with racist incidents would also need to be avoided. Needless to say, students' professional competence should be allowed to emerge in positive and supportive environments. It is recognised that competency-based models of teaching are seen by central government as a means of raising standards of teaching and learning in schools. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the ability to cope with racism will be recognised as inappropriate criteria for judging black students' competency in schools.

Just as it is hoped that HEIs will support students who draw attention to racism, it is also hoped that they will encourage students to make official complaints about discriminatory practices experienced in teaching practice schools. Students will need to be assured that their complaints will not be used against them in the assessments they receive. If HEIs and teaching practice schools are unable to deal with

staff and pupil racism, sexism, classism or prejudices against disability, students might look towards their student union and outside equality units for advice and possible support.

I am aware that as schools take on greater responsibility for teacher education and as the number of years training for B.Ed students is reduced (DFE, 1992, 1993a), that many of the above inititatives may be regarded as demanding too much time for them to be effectively implemented. However, in addition to the suggestions given above, it would be important for HEIs to consider a range of strategies which address the experiences of black teachers so that they can face the world in a way that *'doesn't hurt so much'*. It is also recognised that school-based teacher training together with reductions in government spending on education, will mean an additional burden on already overstretched school budgets. Nevertheless, these increased demands should not be viewed as a reason for the under-training and under-skilling of prospective teachers in schools. It is equally important that voluntary aided and grant maintained schools consider it part of their responsibility to take note of the above and use their resources in the positive and effective training of all teachers.

Woods (1994) has expressed his fears of teachers becoming a 'minority group'. Black teachers are already a minority in teaching. If society is to be provided with skilled teachers and the number of black students who enter ITE and remain in the profession is to be increased, we need to ensure that black student teachers do not use their negative experiences in mainly or all white schools as a reason to leave the profession, or to segregate themselves in schools with a

predominance of black pupils once they qualify. Either scenario would be a loss of valuable skills to the teaching profession as a whole. The wider implications of 'colour matched' student placements provide a basis for further research.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this study I explored the factors which accounted for the under-representation of black teachers in schools, and why black students did not consider teaching an attractive profession to enter. It was argued that racism in teaching and education acted as a barrier to black students entering teaching (Singh, 1988; Swann, 1985). This research has shown that although black women experience racism in their early education it does not necessarily discourage them from entering ITE. Many of the women regarded their negative school experiences as providing them with a basis to help primary children to counteract inequalities in their own education. Research by Siraj-Blatchford (1991) and Clay et al. (1991) has provided evidence of racism in the experiences of black students in ITE. Once in ITE it was noticeable that the women in this study continued to experience racism. Racism has also been shown to be a feature of newly qualified black teachers experience. In chapter four I highlighted some of the difficulties prospective black students would have to encounter in their quest to become teachers. The practitioner experiences of one black teacher in particular, confirmed McKellar's (1989) contention that only 'the fittest of the fittest' survive in teaching. However, despite the extent of their experiences of racism the black women who entered primary ITE at Rosehall College remained committed to teaching right up to the end

of their courses, and remained resilient despite distressing experiences as qualified teachers. The main conclusion therefore which can be drawn from this study is that racism in teaching and education requires urgent attention, but does not necessarily prevent black women from entering ITE or remaining in teaching.

While many of the experiences highlighted in this thesis are indeed negative, the women did also have positive experiences. It is hoped, therefore that others will see teaching as an attractive profession to enter and which can be for them, like it is for the teachers in this study, a career which brings individual joy and fulfilment through educating others. Teaching does not only have to be seen as a lifetime of struggle against racist attitudes and practices.

The conclusions derived from this research have many implications for school-based teacher training. Further research, for example, which examines the role of HEIs and schools in the experience of black ITE students is required. Further research is also needed to examine the relationships between black students and their white counterparts, and between black students and HEI tutors and/or supervising school teachers. Further research could also help to throw more light on the roles black women are expected to play in HEIs as students and as teachers in schools. Such research could provide solutions to some of the issues that have been raised and discussed in this thesis. I would also suggest that the life history experiences of black students outside teaching would need to be examined if a wider understanding is to be gained about the influence of such experiences on black students ITE and qualified teaching experiences.

The intention of this study was to give a voice to black women in ITE and if there is one final message which this thesis can convey through their voices, it is that, it is hoped that the women's concerns will be addressed and that every effort will be made to ensure that black student training experiences do not discourage, or prevent them from taking up much needed positions as qualified teachers. As Olive states movingly,

> There is a definite need for change to make life better for black students but I don't think it will happen because college will be so fearful of losing staff if they initiate any changes. Some of the staff have been teaching for over twenty years and I don't think they will be willing to change how they teach or to look at their racism just to satisfy black students. I really don't think anything will change because black people are a minority in teaching. No, I don't believe anything will change. I can only hope. (Olive)

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APPENDIX

The questions used in the following autobiographical questionnaire were based on those in 'Autobiography, Education and Schooling' (prepared by Lomas, 1988). Lewis (1992) used this formative framework with his student teachers at Deakin University, Australia. I am grateful to Ron Lewis for allowing me to use this autobiographical guide.

Questionnaire

Dear,

Through the following questions you are asked to look at your own life and to reflect upon those aspects which have been most important to your educational development. Your answers to these questions should provide you with a reasonably comprehensive autobiographical account. Before you begin you might find it useful to draw a timeline down the edge of the page and mark on it those aspects of your life, past and present, which you consider to have had a bearing on your educational development. For example,

A g e

4

5 - started school

6 - moved house and changed schools

7 - new teacher

8 - illness, absent from school

9

10

11 - took 11 plus

12

13

14

15

16 - stayed on in sixth form or went to a local college

The following questions may help in your recollections together with old school reports/photographs and diaries if you kept them.

1) Have I remembered everything important about this subject?

2) Have I repressed something because it is too uncomfortable for me to recall?

3) Have I remembered things which never happened?

4) Are my recollections uneven, remembering only the good things and overlooking the bad, or vice versa?

5) Are my perceptions as a child accurate, and if not, are my recollections of them correspondingly distorted?

It may be useful to look for repeated patterns, categories of events, or periods of your life that seem to have significance in their own right. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to this exercise, and not all of the questions will relate to your individual experience. It is meant to be personal and not psychoanalytical.

More importantly, the questions are not designed to question or judge you as an individual, your upbringing, your parents, access to resources, family circumstances etc. They are intended to allow you to write your own personal account of your educational life history.

Before you begin this task may I once again re-assure you that the information provided will be treated with the utmost confidence and anonymity.

WRITING AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Aims related to the preparation of the biography

a) to help individuals construct their own educational biography,

b) to review the range and complexity of the experiences which contribute towards an individual's educational development.

Where do you begin? Start by recalling the physical surroundings (if you can) in which your schooling took place.

Physical surroundings

1. Roughly how old were the buildings?

2. Did the design of the buildings give an indication of the 'philosophy of education' which lay behind them?

3. How do you remember the space being used in your school(s)? Was there any sense of private space (only to be used by teachers, or by prefects)? Was there any space where you felt at home?

4. Did you sit at desks or tables?

5. How were these arranged - in rows facing the teacher's desk or arranged in groups around the room?

Primary school

1. What sort of things did you do during the school day at primary school?

2. What were you expected to learn?

3. What did you learn?

4. How were reading, writing and arithmetic taught?

5. What can you remember about reading your books?

6. Did you have any difficulty with learning to read, or was it something you grasped quite quickly?

7. When learning basic maths did you use equipment - blocks, sand, water, scales, measuring rods - or was the teaching at an abstract level?

8. Were there some things that you were expected to learn in a fashion, for example, multiplication tables or poetry? Can you remember them now?

9. Was the class taught as a whole or in several groups? Were the children expected and allowed to work at their own pace?

10. Were visual aids used at all - models, films, wall charts and such like?

11. Did you do any project work to integrate different subject matter, for example, a study of your own community which involved looking at history, geography, natural history?

12. Was most (or all) of the teaching carried out in the classroom, or did you go out of doors (or outside the limits of the school) on natural ramblings, or to visit places like towns, factories or historical sites? Were such excursions common place, or were they looked upon as an occasional special treat?

13. Did people from outside the school come in at all to show things to the children or talk about their job, for instance? Were there any attempts to bring people from other countries, cultures or age groups into school?

14. What are your memories of beginning secondary school? Was the transition a gentle one or was it a rude awakening? What were the main incongruities?

Secondary school

Please go back to questions 9-13 above and answer them in relation to your secondary schooling. Please number these 1 to 4.

5. What subjects were offered on the timetable?

6. Were boys and girls taught these subjects?

7. Were you expected to do homework?

8. Did you do it?

9. Did it take up a lot of your time?

10. How was it regarded by your parents?

11. How did you learn about your traditions and your history?

Teachers

1. How do you remember your teachers - as concerned with your education and welfare and trying to interest you in the various subjects, or as misguided, lacking any inspiration, or just plainly unsuited to the task?

2. Think of a teacher whom you disliked, what was it about him or her that made you feel that way? What effect, if any, did it have on you?

3. Same as 2, but refer to a teacher whom you liked.

4. Did you see teachers as approachable and benevolent people on the whole, or were they aloof and objects of fear?

5. Were you conscious at all of your teachers as 'people', with lives outside of school? Did the teachers have much to do with the children out of school hours or in the holidays - clubs, sports, trips etc.?

6. How important a figure was the headteacher?

7. Did s/he impose a 'tone' on the school? If so, how was this done, and how did it manifest itself?

8. Did the headteacher play any more personal role in your education - by helping you with your choice of subjects or job, for example?

9. Were you taught by both male and female teachers? If, for example, you were taught predominantly by women in your primary years, are you aware of this having had any influence on you? Similarly, if you were taught by all male, or all female staff during your secondary years what effect did this have?

10. Did this influence your views about which school subject areas were 'masculine' or 'feminine'?

11. Were the schools themselves mixed or single sex? If mixed: what to you are the advantages and disadvanges (if any) of boys and girls being educated together? If single sex, what to you are the advantages and disadvantages of either being with all boys or all girls?

Discipline and control

1. How did teachers attempt to keep order in the school?

2. Was corporal punishment used? If so, to what extent and with what effect?

3. How else did teachers attempt to establish control over the children?

4. Were there differences in style between those teachers who achieved control and those who could not?

5. Did you miss much of your schooling or were you a regular attender?

6. If you missed much of your schooling was this because of illness, family circumstances, or because you played truant?

7. If you played truant, why was this? Did your parents know? What was their attitude to it? How did you spend the time you should have been at school?

8. Was your schooling disrupted, for example, by illness, or circumstances beyond your control, for example, wars, deaths in the family.

9. What effect did these absences (for whatever reason) have on your progress at school?

Exams and assessment

1. What part did regular assessment play in your school life? Did you have tests? Did you have regular school exams?

2. Can you remember how the results from these were used? Was it to grade people? Did the weaker children get any additional help?

3. Were there any group systems of rewards, for example, recognition for the house, grade or form whose members gained the best exam results?

4. Did these incentives have any effect on you?

5. What view of yourself did you derive from the results of such exams and tests?

6. Was there any test or examination at the completion of your primary schooling?

7. Were you prepared in any special way for this test or examination, for example, special coaching out of school, additional homework or increased pressure from the teacher to perform better?

8. Were you aware of the importance of preparing yourself for the change from primary to secondary school?

9. How did your performance affect the selection of the secondary school that you subsequently attended?

10. What examinations did you take before leaving secondary school?

11. If you took any exams was it because this had always been expected, or did you have to make a conscious decision to take them?

12. What, or who played the major part in your making that decision?

13. How were the decisions made about which exam courses (subjects) you were to follow? How do you view those decisions looking back?

14. Do you think you could have passed more exams, or did better than you did? What prevented you from doing so?

15. If you didn't take any exams why was this?

16. Do you think you were capable of taking exams?

17. What difference would it have made to you if you had passed more or performed better in your exams than you did?

18. How might your life have developed had you not passed the exams that you did?

Home and school

1. Did you go to nursery school, kindergarten or some other form of pre-school provision?

2. Can you remember anything of what it was like or what you did there?

3. What were the main reasons for you being sent to nursery school? Was it for the educational headstart that it might provide, or so that you would be with children of your own age group, or to enable your mother to go out to work?

4. Do you feel that those pre-school experiences had any significant effect on you, either at the time or subsequently?

5. What was your school's attitude to parents (primary and secondary)? Did it seek to involve them in the day to day life of the school, did it keep them at arm's length, or did it ignore them completely? How did these attitudes show themselves?

6. Did the school actively seek to help parents to understand what was being taught and how it was being taught? How did it do this?

7. How were your parents able to find out how you were getting on at school? Were there open days or parents' evenings when they could look at your work and talk to teachers about your progress? Were written reports sent home from school? If you still have any of these reports look through them and consider what your parents might have gleaned from them.

8. In general how did your parents respond to what was offered by the school by way of opportunities for contact? Did they welcome the opportunity to go to the school? Were they uncomfortable about the prospect of talking to the teachers? Were they indifferent or hostile to the whole idea? If so, why?

Leaving school

1. Did you continue with formal education beyond compulsory schooling?

2. If you left school at the earliest opportunity was this through choice? Did you fail the necessary exams or not pass them at a high enough level? Was there any pressure on you to leave or get a job, for instance to boost the family income or to look after siblings?

3. If you were making those decisions again what changes would you make?

4. If you studied beyond 16 - how did you decide which subjects to continue to study at a higher level? Did you have any help making *those decisions*? (If you left education go to question 11.)

5. Did your performance in the next set of exams (for example, B.Tec, A'levels, other school certificates, Access courses, diplomas) allow you to make the choices you wanted to?

6. If you did not come directly to Rosehall College of Higher Education at 18, how far did you go with full-time education? What did you do?

7. How did you decide what to do? What were the influences on you at the time? Were you able to do what you wanted to do?

8. Have you had any experience of courses outside of fulltime education which you joined to acquire specific knowledge or skills? What prompted you to do this? What did you get out of it? Was this stage of your education related to getting a particular type of job, or did you undertake it without any specific job intention in mind?

9. Looking back, are you satisfied with the decisions that you took (or were taken for you) about this phase of your education?

10. What sorts of links have there been between your school and higher education and the jobs that you have done since? How much was one a preparation for the other? Could it have been? Should it have been?

11. When you left school at 16 did you get a job straight away?

12. Was this a job that you wanted to do?

13. Did the job involve any element of continuing education, for example, through an apprenticeship, or was it a job where there was little room for development once the necessary skills had been acquired?

14. How well suited was the education you received at school to the work you were doing once you had left?

15. Looking back at the decisions which you took (or which were taken for you) about getting a job, would you have done things differently if you were making those decisions again?

Home and leisure

1. How would you describe your class background?

2. How did your parents feel about education in the broad sense of the term? Was it something that they valued highly or did they seem indifferent or hostile to it?

3. On what do you base this judgement? Can you trace the origin of their values?

4. Did your parents agree on this subject? Do you know whether their feelings on this were the same for both boys and girls?

5. Did you do a lot of reading at home? What sort of books, comics or magazines did you read?

6. Did you choose your reading matter or was it chosen for you?

7. Did you belong to a library?

8. Did your parents try to help you to learn to read?

9. Did your parents give you help with your school work in other ways? What sort of help did they give you?

10. How did you respond to this help? Did you accept it? Did you feel that they were pushing you too hard when you would rather have been doing other things?

11. How, if at all, did your parents encourage you? Were there rewards for good performance? Were there punishments for poor work?

12. Did the amount or type of help or encouragement vary during the course of your school career?

13. Did you receive help with school work from any other adult - an older sibling, relative or a family friend?

14. How did you spend your time when you were young (pre-school)? Did you tend to play indoors or were you outside a lot, in the open or in the streets?

15. What games did you play? What toys did you have to play with at home?

16. Were you mostly with children of your own age, or were your play mates predominantly older or younger than you?

17. Were you a solitary child or did you spend a lot of time in the company of other children?

18. How did you spend your leisure time when you were of school age?

19. Were there any hobbies or activities which took up a lot of your time? Do you feel that these had a lasting influence on you?

20. Did you belong to any clubs or groups, such as the Girl Guides or sporting clubs. Again did this have a lasting influence on you?

21. Were there any activities that most or all of your family entered into together? Did you enjoy these or were they something of an imposition?

22. Did your parents have particular interests, hobbies or skills which they tried to initiate you into?

23. Looking back, do you view your parents as interesting and stimulating people, or were they stuck in a rut, or preoccupied with other things? If the latter, was this through choice or necessity?

24. Were there other adults (besides teachers) who played a significant part in your childhood? What did you learn from them?

Standards

1. Was religion an important feature of your childhood? If so, has it had a lasting effect on you?

2. What would you say were the prevailing standards of your home and family?

3. Did your parents try to teach you about abstract concepts such as right and wrong, or honesty, or concern for other people's feelings? How did they do this? How much influence did it have on you?

4. As you grew older, possibly during your adolescence, did you come to question your parents views and standards? In what way? Were there serious and far reaching differences, for example, in religion and politics, or were they somewhat ephemeral, such as the way you dressed or the time you came home at night?

5. What (if any) were the influences on you that caused you to change? Was it the people of your own age that you mixed with (your peer group), or adults other than your parents, or things that you read, or what? How did your parents react to these changes?

Current experiences

1. How do you spend your leisure time? Are you content with this? How would you like to spend your leisure time if given the opportunity? How important are these activities to you?

2. Do you watch a lot of television or listen to the radio? What sort of programmes do you choose? How do you decide? How important is television and radio in your life as a way of relaxing and as a way of finding out what is happening in the world?

3. What sort of things do you read? How do you decide what to read next?

4. Have you travelled much? Has this had any significant influence on you?

5. If you are married or otherwise share your life with another adult, what effect has this had on you?

6. If you have spent a proportion of your adult years looking after your children and running a home, how do you rate this experience - as creative and fulfilling, as tedious but necessary, as demanding and something to be reduced to the absolute minimum? How has this experience changed you?

7. If you have children, or if you come into regular contact with children, have they contributed to your general education? In what ways?

8. Have there been any dominating experiences in your life which you see as having a significant and lasting effect on you, for example, ill health, material poverty, living abroad, religious beliefs, going to boarding school, death of a relative or friend, being an only child or being adopted?

9. What were your reasons for doing a B.Ed degree? Have your reasons changed as you have progressed through the course?

10. What effect has the B.Ed had on you? Has it changed your life? If it has, in what ways?

Additional questions for those born abroad

1. Where were you born? Where did you live? What was the environment like, for example, mountainous, plains, forests, flats, cities, town or villages?

2. What were your experiences like and people's reactions to you when you came to Britain? How long did it take for people to accept you?

3. Influence of environments since living in Britain - do you get homesick? What for? Have you been back? What was it like? Do you feel a part of your present environment?

4. Languages - how many languages do you speak? If English is not your first language what were your experiences like learning English?

5. How does your early schooling abroad compare with your British schooling (if you transferred to a school on arrival in Britain)?

Educational family tree

To complete the above task could you please construct your educational family tree. This means highlighting each member of your family, grandparents, parents, siblings etc., and attributing to each their age, level of education and their occupation.

I know the above has been very time consuming but I hope you found it useful and enjoyed this process. Thankyou very much for your time and effort.